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# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

WORKSHOP

## 15 LIGHTING KEY TIPS

Our best-ever advice  
on colour and lighting



## IMPROVE YOUR PORTFOLIO

Create art that will  
secure your next job

ALSO INSIDE

DO YOU NEED AN ART  
DEGREE TO SUCCEED?

HOW TO VISUALISE A  
SCENE FOR A FILM

PEEK INTO BETSY  
BAUER'S STUDIO

17  
INSPIRING  
SKETCHES  
TO GET YOU  
DRAWING!

*Quick draw!*

# ANIMATION

Artist **Pernille Ørum** reveals her sure-fire ways  
to draw and paint engaging characters



★ **AARON BLAISE** THE LEGENDARY LION KING ANIMATOR ON LIFE AFTER DISNEY ★



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## Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



If you know anything about me, you'll know how much I love our Artist in Residence feature. This issue is no different as vis-dev artist Betsy Bauer takes us on a tour of her creative space. Not only did I love it, (I also loved her top, but that's another non-art story...), but I

also admired her honesty. She says, "Everything you see here is a lie – this is the absolute cleanest my studio has ever been, or will ever be."

Her admission is a humorous reminder to not always take what's presented to you so seriously. We're bombarded with perfect depictions of other people's lives via social media or glossy mags, but can forget it's a dressed-up version of reality.

Also, take note of Sam Guay's workshop on page 108. Here she sets goals for her work before starting a piece. She measures her success based on how she lived up to those goals. She actively eschews social media and relies on herself for validation. Bravo to both of these women.

As always, thank you for picking up ImagineFX. I love hearing from you, so please drop me a line!

*Claire*

**Claire Howlett, Editor**  
[claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com)

### EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

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#### Circle of life

How a heartbreaking turn of events in Aaron Blaise's life became a way to share his knowledge with the world.

46



#### Everyday people

Artist Max Ulichney turns his people-watching skills into sketches, with very amusing results.

70



#### Tips in the key of light

I couldn't get enough of Drew Hartel's insight into creating lighting keys. For me it's this issue's must-read.

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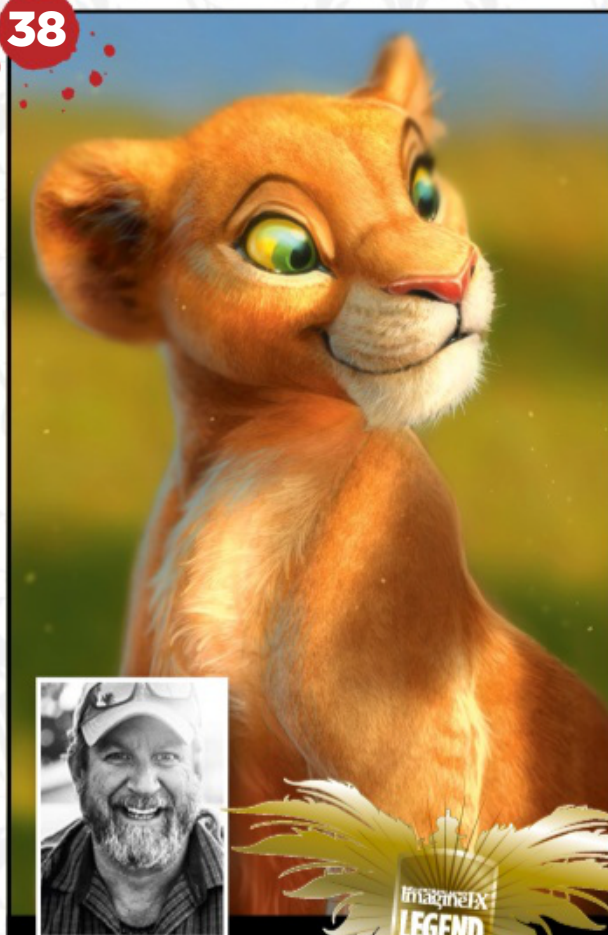
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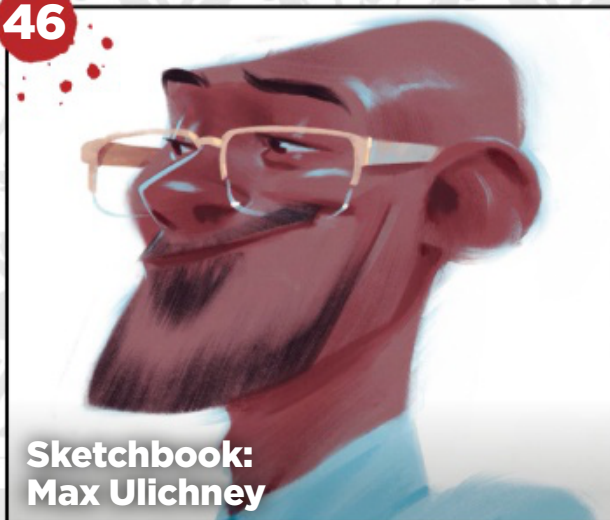


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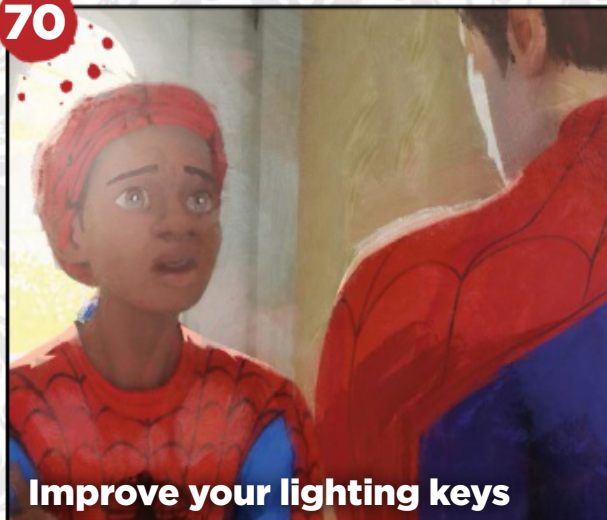


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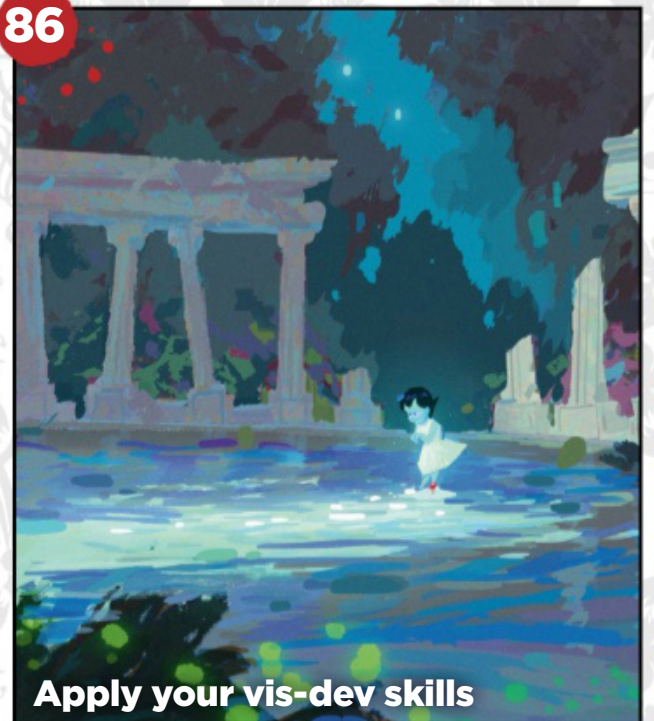
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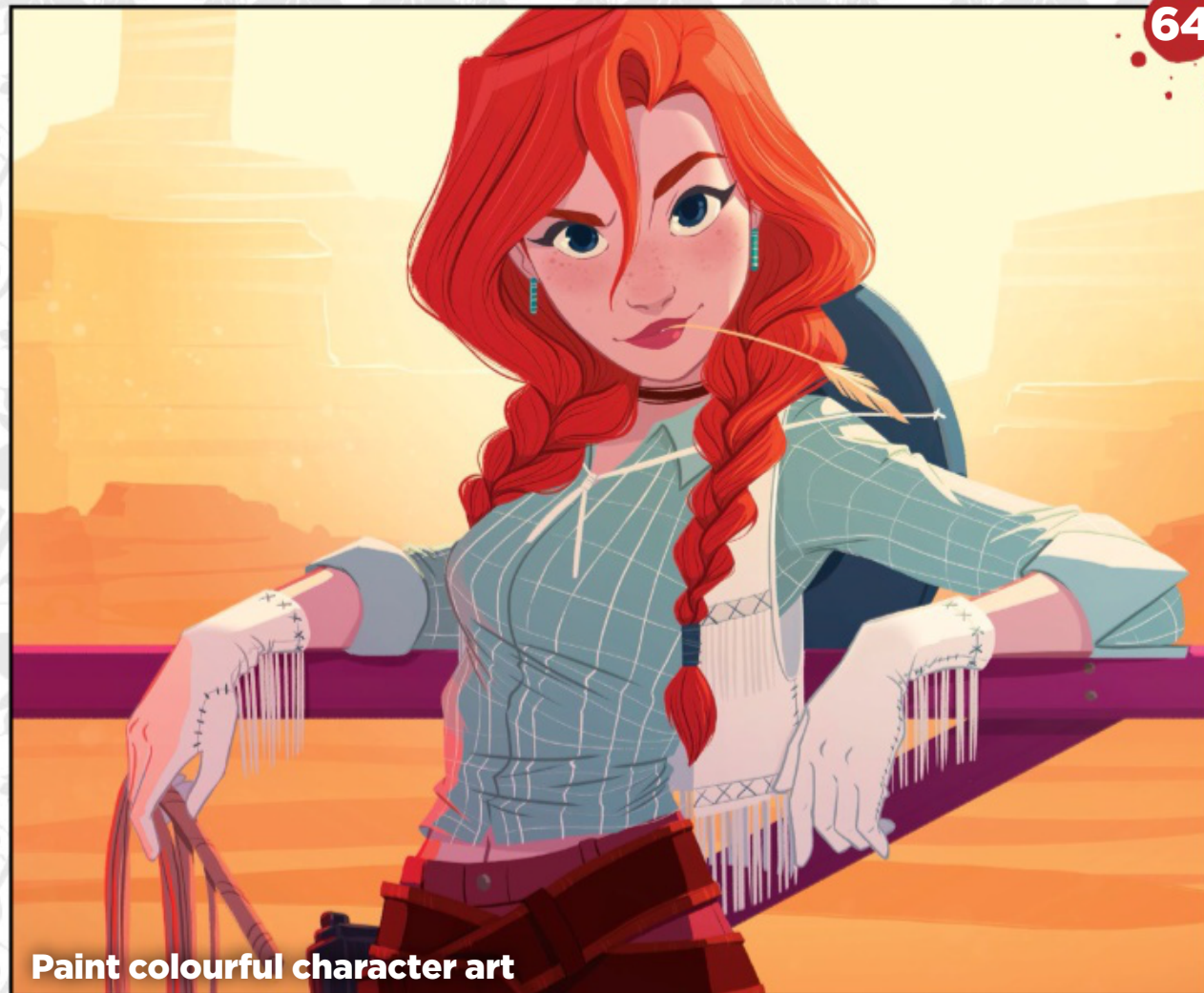
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Colouring in cartoon characters helped hone this artist's skills at an early age.





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# Resources

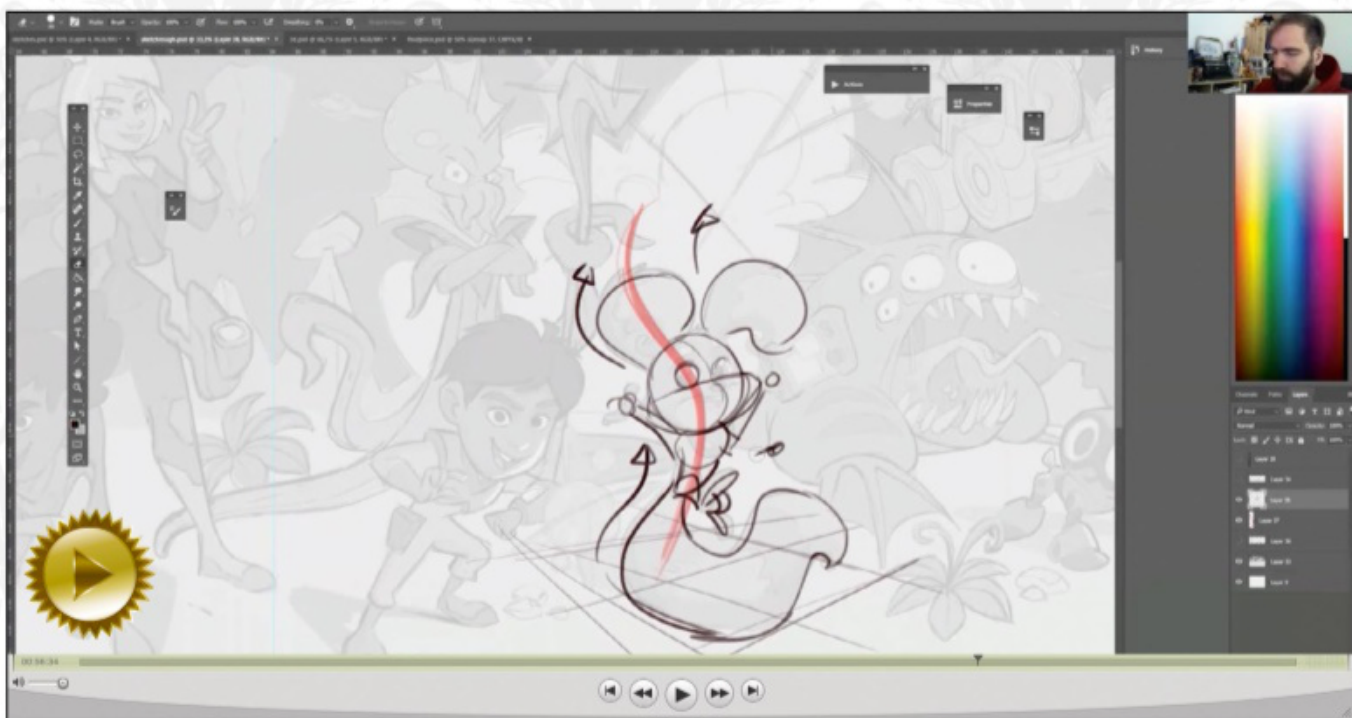
Getting hold of this issue's video resources is quick and easy. Just visit <https://ifxm.ag/animation175art>

## WORKSHOP VIDEOS



### Learn new colour blocking and lighting techniques

Watch how Pernille Ørum paints her 'cowgirl with attitude', and see page 64 for more insights.



### Boost your portfolio - and your job prospects!

See Mitch Leeuwe paint a character line-up for a potential animation project. More on page 80.

## PLUS 7 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...

#### GOUACHE BRUSH

Pernille Ørum uses this modification of a Kyle T Webster brush to paint facial textures.

#### SKETCH

This brush is perfect for enabling Mitch Leeuwe to quickly visualise his character ideas and designs.

#### MIXER

If you want to introduce colour variations in your work, try Simon Baek's brush with the Pencil tool.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
**ImagineFX**

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"I do everything he does, but backwards - and in heels"  
Tessa Thompson

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# FXPosé

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ARTIST  
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## Jenny Brozek

LOCATION: Austria MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [www.artstation.com/jennybrozek](http://www.artstation.com/jennybrozek)

Jenny recently graduated from university with a degree in game art and 3D animation, and now works as a junior concept artist at Rabcat Game Art.

1



2



### 1 NEPTUNE PORTRAIT

"Here's a close-up of my character Neptune. My goal was to get as much detail as possible into this illustration – from skin pores to individual strands of hair."

### 2 MOONROOM

"Moondancer is the first figure that I painted from my personal project, in which I visualised planets as bad-ass women."

### 3 VENUS

"This piece was quite a challenge, because I'd never done splash art like this before. I enjoyed painting her, and tried to push the sense of motion."

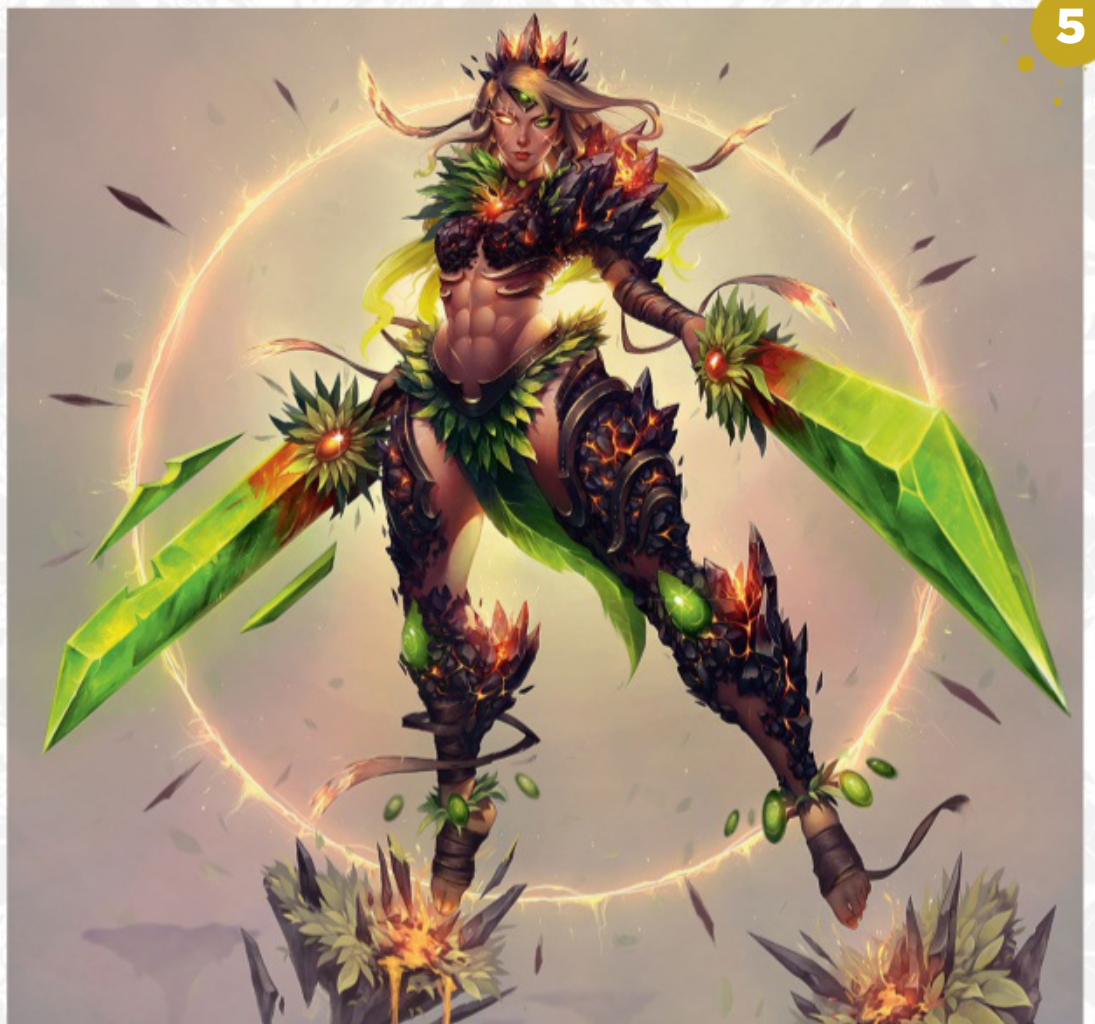
### 4 NEPTUNE

"Neptune should have a strong but feminine attitude. Because she's blind, she uses her flying shells to see."

### 5 EARTH

"I started drawing these women to refine my rendering technique, but then my practice sessions became my very own project!"









## Iain Matthiae

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Photoshop, 3D-Coat, Substance Painter, Blender **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/purplicas](http://www.artstation.com/purplicas)

Iain's fascination with creatures started with Godzilla. "With sculpting and 3D I've been able to bring whatever grotesque thing I imagine to life," he says. "Sadly, they don't move or gurgle just yet, but I'm learning animation."

### 1 SOUP OF THE DAY

"This is an older illustration, but it has never left my portfolio. I love market scenes, and this piece holds a special place in my heart."

### 2 THE INNSMOUTH LOOK

"Being a big fan of HP Lovecraft's work, I've tried to adapt the fishy citizens of Innsmouth many times."

### 3 THE PACK MASTER

"I feel that the werewolf is a timeless design. Finding the right balance between human and beast is a great exercise."







# Vicky Sio

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [www.vicsio.net](http://www.vicsio.net)

Concept artist and illustrator Vicky is based in San Francisco. She studied at The Safehouse Atelier, and was able to learn some classical painting and drawing techniques from figurative artist Carl Dobsky.



## 1 PASSING

"An old man in his peaceful final moments. Even though he may have regrets, all things come to an end. I was going through a teal phase when I was working on this."

## 2 HUNTER

"They're going to get the pig! My focus was to create more action. I struggled most with making the boar read as a boar – good reference material came in handy."

## 3 GIANTS' FOREST

"I tried to make a piece that focuses more on the environment. I wanted to exaggerate the contrast between the big and small shapes, to make sure that the moth appeared gigantic within the composition."



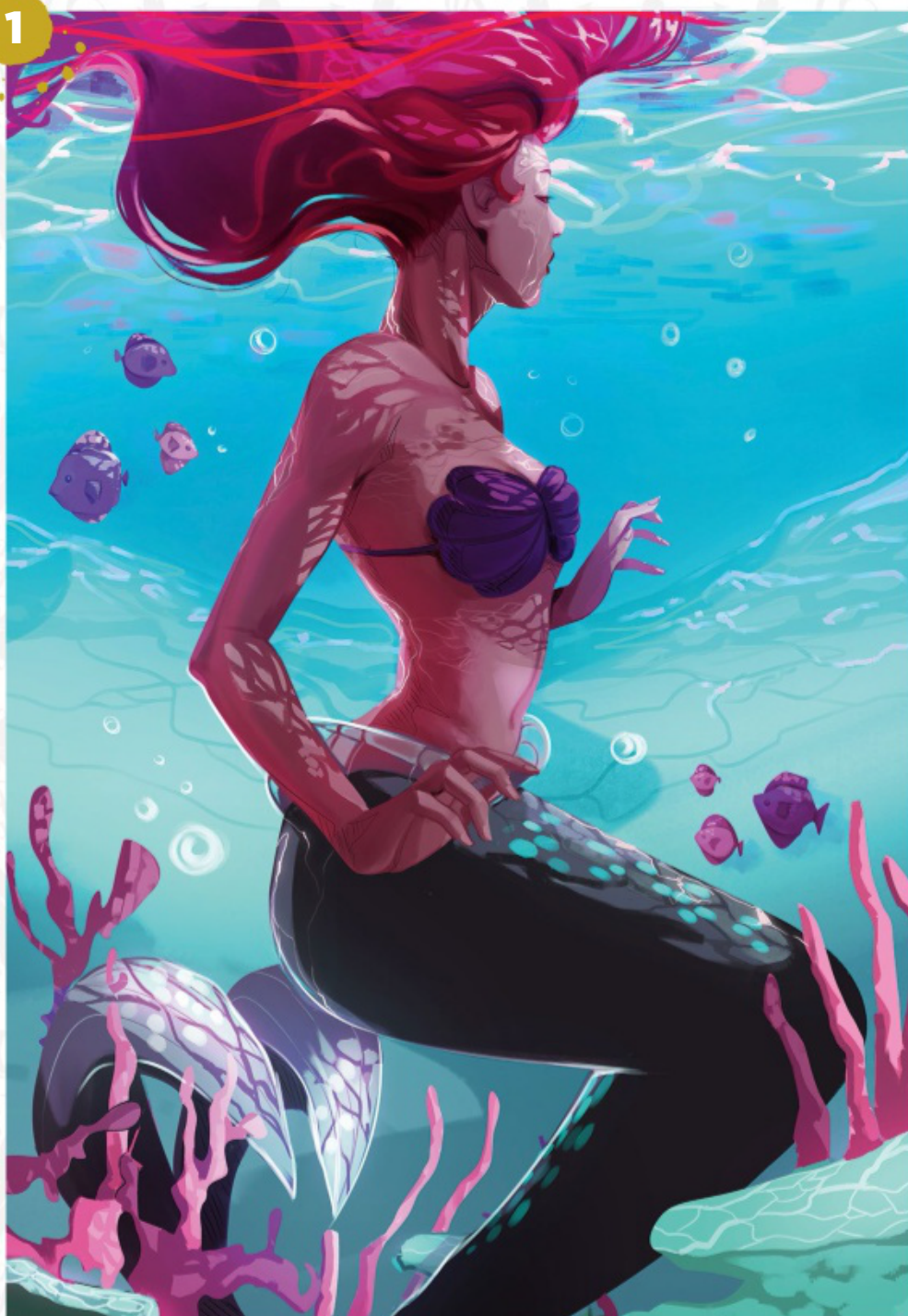




## Dahlia Khodur

**LOCATION:** Lebanon **MEDIA:** Photoshop, SketchBook **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/dahlia](http://www.artstation.com/dahlia)

Illustrator and graphic design tutor Dahlia likes to paint dark subjects in colourful colour palettes. Her main inspirations are DC's range of comics, pin-up styles and Disney character concepts.



### 1 ARIEL

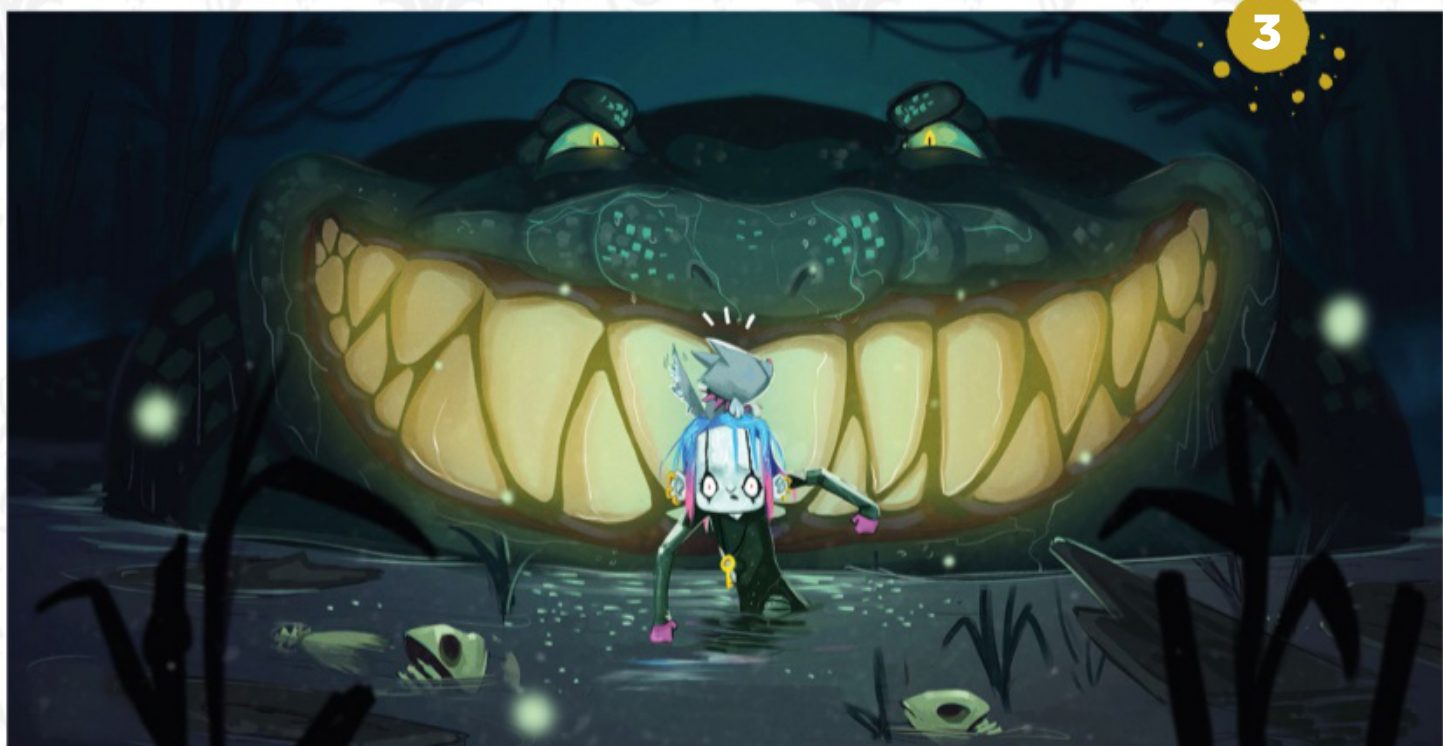
"This bright, colourful setting is Ariel's natural habitat. I experimented with a painterly style and chose a somewhat unconventional pose, with the mermaid looking away from the camera."

### 2 CHESHIRE TICKETS

"A spin-off of Alice in Wonderland. Here, Alice is lost in a carnival and strange creatures are trying to trick her into surrendering her soul to the ringleader, the Jabberwocky."

### 3 CROC

"A girl ventures to retrieve a key that opens a giant safe, as part of a challenge set by a millionaire. Little did she know that the traps the millionaire had built are purely for his entertainment."





4

**4 PINK JADE**

"A portrait of a character based around the theme of an undead carnival. The bright pink and jade symbolise vitality and energy, in contrast with the dead."







## Swann Tolazzi

**LOCATION:** France **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/soon](http://www.artstation.com/soon)

Freelance concept artist and illustrator Swann loves to create peaceful landscapes. He tends to sketch his ideas on paper before scanning the art into Photoshop for colouring.

1



2







3



4

## 1 RED ROCK CITY

"I draw places that I'd love to visit. This town has been built in the heart of the red land, full of deserts, caves and secrets."

## 2 THE GREEN CANYON

"I decided to paint a tiny mushroom cottage occupying its own patch of flying soft grass. Airborne homes are the best!"

## 3 CITADEL

"Here's another place that I'd like to visit in real life, although I'd have to take extra care while walking on the cliff-top paths"

## 4 KINGDOM

"I love the moment you get in the evening when the clouds turn red. This is real magic, when anything can happen."





## Vilenko Vujičević

**LOCATION:** Czech Republic **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/vilenko](http://www.artstation.com/vilenko)

Originally from Croatia, Vilenko works as an IT engineer when he's not painting. He likes to create fantasy and sci-fi characters and story illustrations based on the worlds inside his head.

### 1 THE HUNT

"I always liked the idea of humanoid animals. I took inspiration from The Island of Doctor Moreau, although it bears little relation to the book."

### 2 OVERPOWER

"I sketched this one during a workshop I attended a few months ago in Seville, I had a great time there, and decided to finish it up as a memento."

### 3 CLASH

"I like to throw in some sci-fi into my portfolio work for good measure! For this piece, I imagined a gladiator duel taking place in outer space."

2



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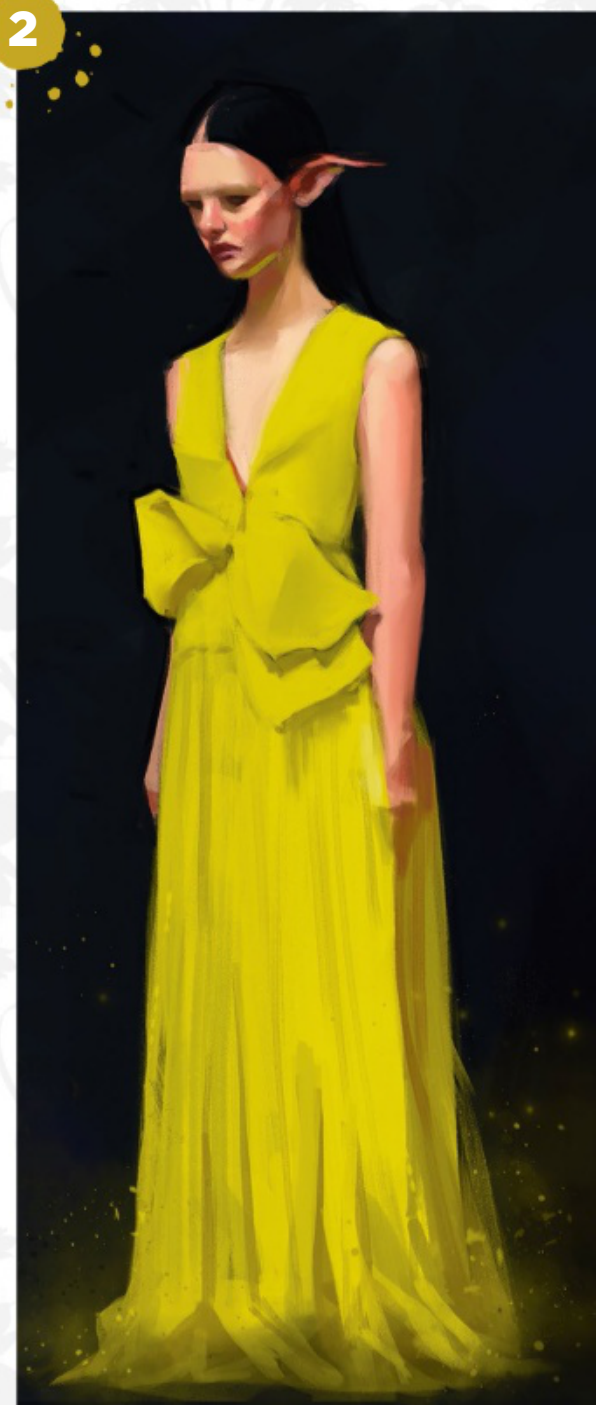


# Scotty Poquerusse

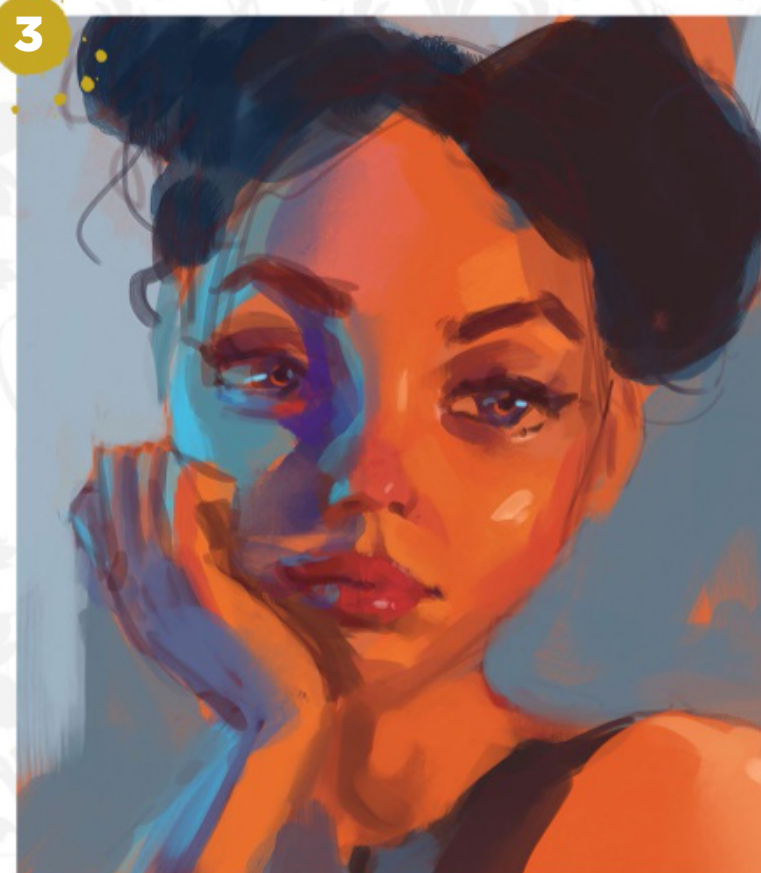
**LOCATION:** France **MEDIA:** Photoshop, Procreate **WEB:** [www.artstation.com/scottypqrs](http://www.artstation.com/scottypqrs)

Scotty started taking his art seriously in 2015, when health problems made him reassess his life priorities. "You have to be curious to keep progressing," he says.

2



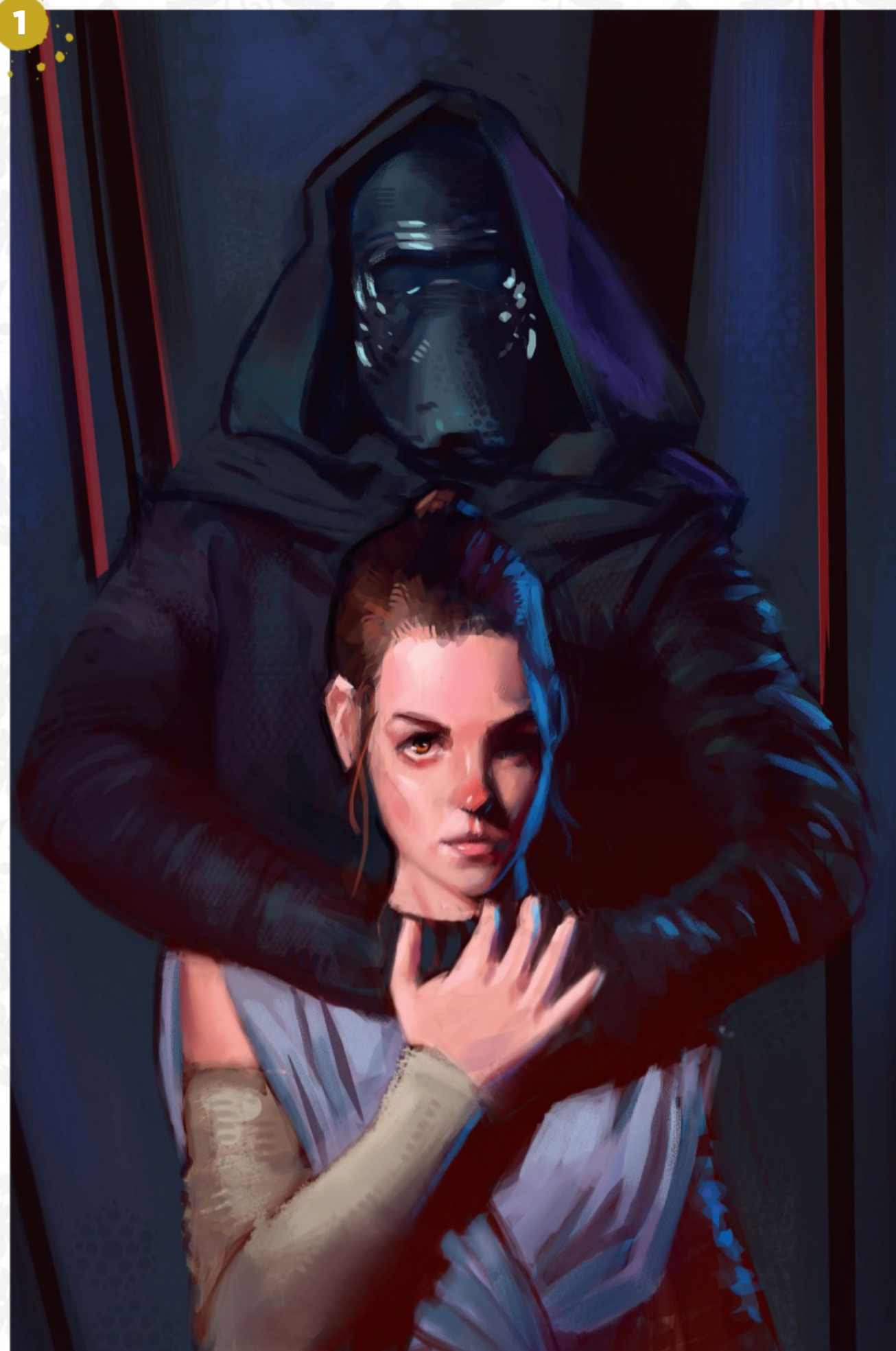
3



## 3 RAW

"In this portrait I experimented with colours, contrast and economic brushstrokes. It's a really quick sketch, and I like feeling of raw energy it has."

1



## 1 RULE OF TWO

"Based on a photo study from Instagram user @leophotography9584. The lighting was amazing. I introduced dark outlines on the characters to make them pop."

## 2 YELLOW

"After being inspired by dark fantasy, I gathered suitable references from Pinterest. I'm happy with my colour choices. The character's story is open to interpretation."









# Jon Juarez

**LOCATION:** Spain **MEDIA:** Photoshop, pencils **WEB:** [www.harriorrihar.myportfolio.com](http://www.harriorrihar.myportfolio.com)

Most of Jon's works are drawn in pencil and coloured in Photoshop. "I was not raised by wolves... but it would have been cool," he says. "Pencils, pens and technology dragged me towards civilisation."

## 1 GUANGZHOU

"One of a series of illustrations that I did for The Atlantic newspaper, for its report on the FAST (Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope) observatory in China."

## 2 SHEPHERDESS 1

"There's a cord that leads the way, but it's not useful when the landscape is changing faster than you can remember it. The cord is the memory of a journey or path that no longer exists."



## 3 SHEPHERDESS 2

"A young person prepares to undertake an intergalactic journey that will fold them into a new time, as if they were a piece of origami, aboard a quantum spaceship."

## 4 BEIJING

"The writer Aristas Martínez found an earlier version of this illustration, and liked it so much that he commissioned me to do something similar for his book La Vida de los Clones."





ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS

# ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY

"Self-learning can be successful if you really know what you want to do," says Daniel Tal.







## LIGHTBOX EXPO AWAITS

We speak to esteemed illustrator and all-round nice chap Bobby Chiu about his upcoming art event, which has attracted some big industry names...

Page 29



## ROAR INTO ACTION

Tiger-loving Betsy Bauer is a supporter of LA Zoo, but is so busy that she rarely has time to spend an afternoon sketching any of the big cats.

Page 30



## YOU WRITE IN, WE REPLY

This is your chance to tell us what you'd like to see in the magazine, what's caught your eye in the art community, or to get something off your chest!

Page 37



"The path you decide to take depends a lot upon your personality, and your ability to self-motivate," says Sean Andrew Murray.



"With CG Spectrum, you can be learning online from a Disney animator or a Blizzard concept artist," says Nick Fredin.

# Do you need a degree to become a pro?

**Class war** What's the best route into the creative industries: formal education or self-teaching? Artists share their views with **Tom May**

**So you want to join a big-name studio, working on AAA video games, blockbuster films or ground-breaking TV series. What will help you get through the door: a degree, or teaching yourself through online tutorials and courses?**

In 2016, **Daniel Tal** graduated with a BA in applied arts animation from Sheridan College in Oakville, Canada. He's since been employed as a story artist with Pipeline Studios in Hamilton, so the formal path clearly worked for him. Yet he has a startling admission. "I realised about a year or two into college that the entire curriculum, more or less,

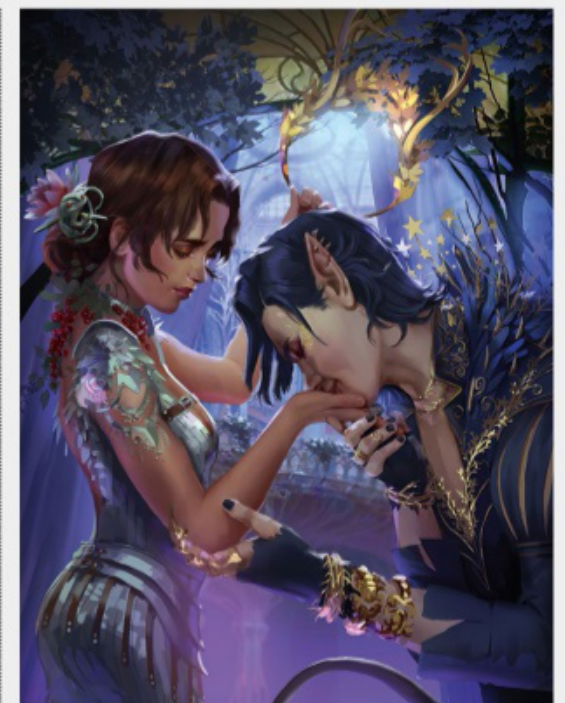


was doable on my own," he recalls. "Almost everything school teaches you, you can learn yourself through books and the internet."

That said, he doesn't regret his BA. "I'm not the type of person who can self-regulate well," he says, "and going through a formal programme forces you to avoid procrastination." It also exposes you to things you might not have considered. "I only found interest in storyboarding in my second year of college," says Daniel. "Had I not gone, I don't think I would have ever tried it."



Not all courses are perfect, of course. **Mélanie Bourgeois**, now a concept



"Chances are you'll need the internet to cover your programme's blind spots," says Mélanie Bourgeois.

artist for Volta, had a less-than-satisfactory experience studying 2D and 3D animation at a university in Quebec. "I was part of the first cohort, so a lot of things moved around when I attended," she says. "None of the teachers were 2D animators, and while they were very nice, none of them had the skills to mentor a student hands-on when it came to 2D."

Consequently, Mélanie had to fill in the gaps herself, using online ➡

“None of the teachers were 2D animators, or had the skills to mentor a student hands-on”



## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

### CHRIS OATLEY

*The Disney artist offers advice to would-be animation students*

#### Do you need a degree to work in animation?

No. Success in animation isn't about buildings or certificates. The Lion King crew were studio outcasts – literally. Animation legend Floyd Norman described the original Pixar headquarters as a “patchwork of rooms and cubicles”. You don't need an expensive degree from a fancy school. You just need great teachers from whom you can learn the basics of composition, colour, anatomy, perspective, and the power of visual storytelling.

#### What questions should students ask when researching schools?

The key question is: “How effective is the education?” Whether the school is online or physical, talk to as many alumni as possible. Do the students' stories align with the promises of the administration? If not, something is wrong.

#### A good time to bring up debt?

Yes. When you're young, it's almost impossible to understand the pain that accompanies debt. Talk to alumni who've been living with it for a decade or so. Listen to the problems found in the chasm between the cost of a physical art school and the consequences of ineffective teachers.

#### What skills do graduates who are entering the industry lack?

Under-developed fundamentals: colour, composition, anatomy and perspective. No apparent understanding of visual storytelling. No solid business skills. The good news is that, with the internet, it's never been easier or more affordable to develop these skills.



*Chris is working on a range of Disney projects, and runs his own art school: The Oatley Academy Of Visual Storytelling.*

[www.chrisoatley.com](http://www.chrisoatley.com)

“The higher your skills and experience, the less importance your degree will have”, says Mélanie.



➡ learning resources. Yet she's unsure how well she'd have coped if she'd self-taught entirely. “School helped me focus; I might have found it overwhelming all on my own,” she says. “Online learning also doesn't provide the same level of contacts and networks, or force you to consume culture outside your personal tastes.”

The choice largely depends, Mélanie feels, on the individual. “I know many successful artists who are self-taught,” she says. “And no one is going to turn down a good artist because they don't have a piece of paper.”

But if both paths are valid, which is right for you? “It's a very tough

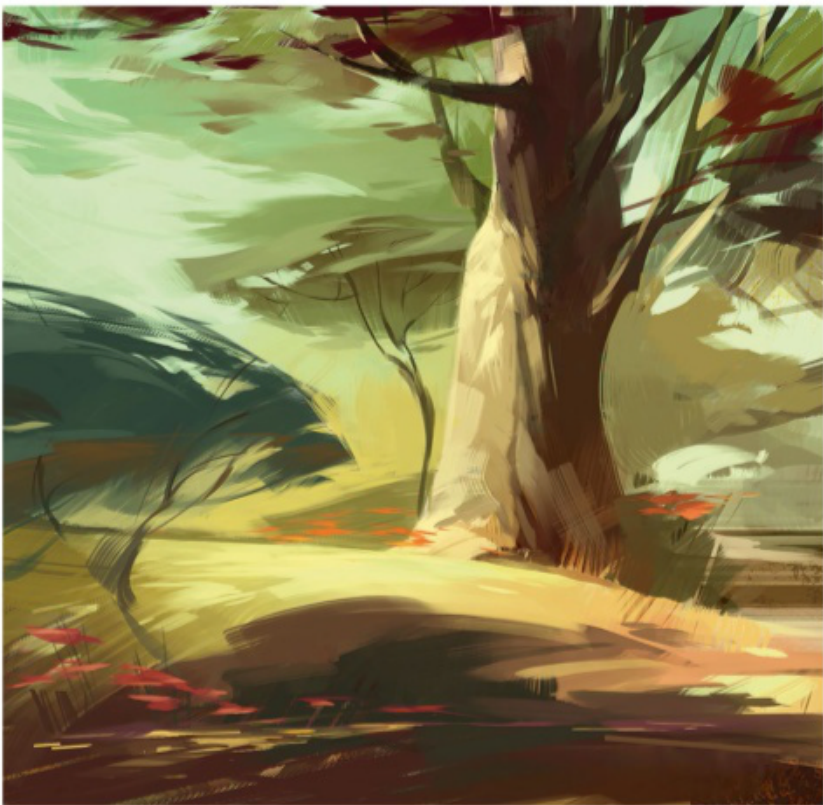
“Online learning doesn't provide the same level of contacts and networks”



decision, with many factors to consider,” says **Nick Fredin** of online course provider CG Spectrum. A major one

is cost: “In the US, degrees can cost over \$100,000, with no guarantee of a job at the end of it.” Going it alone, though, can be daunting. “Without structured pathways guiding you towards your goals, self-teaching can





be overwhelming and frustrating,” he cautions. “Opening a tool like Maya for the first time can be pretty scary.”

## STUDENT DEBT CAN BE A FACTOR

So how do you decide? Usefully, **Lauren Panepinto**, creative director and VP of Orbit Books, has created a tongue-in-cheek flowchart that can help guide you towards an informed choice (see page 27). But what’s her personal take? “I’m glad I went to art school,” she says. “But if I had to do it again, and go into deep debt as a result, I probably wouldn’t. I’d go to a community ➡



“I almost never meet professional artists who believe their ‘physical’ art school degree was worth the cost,” says Chris Oatley.

“Don’t just look at software courses: a programme should also give you a good art foundation,” cautions Sean.







➡ college, get a cheaper, well-rounded degree, and study art on the side. I'd use the money I'd saved to travel to seminars and conventions, and take online mentorships."

You'd might expect **Sean Andrew Murray** – a concept artist for the entertainment industry who also



teaches Illustration at Ringling College of Art and Design in Florida – to disapprove of self-teaching. But he, too, can

"At Ringling College, we organise paid experience for students, working with real-world clients," says Sean.

"Before enrolling on any course, download some software and try some tutorials first," advises Nick.



"Self-taught artists probably need to prove themselves more than university graduates to get their first job," says Mélanie Bourgeois.



see the benefits. "It enables you to craft exactly the kind of education you want, without all of the stuff you don't," he says. "You can learn at your own pace, whether that's slow and steady – perhaps while working another job – or rapidly, to get into the field quicker than the standard four-year higher education program."

## ACADEMIC NETWORK IS A PLUS

One big disadvantage, though, is that it'll probably be harder to build your network. "The best schools connect students with a network of professors – many of whom may be industry pros themselves – as well as advisers, visiting artists, networking and recruiting events, and also other

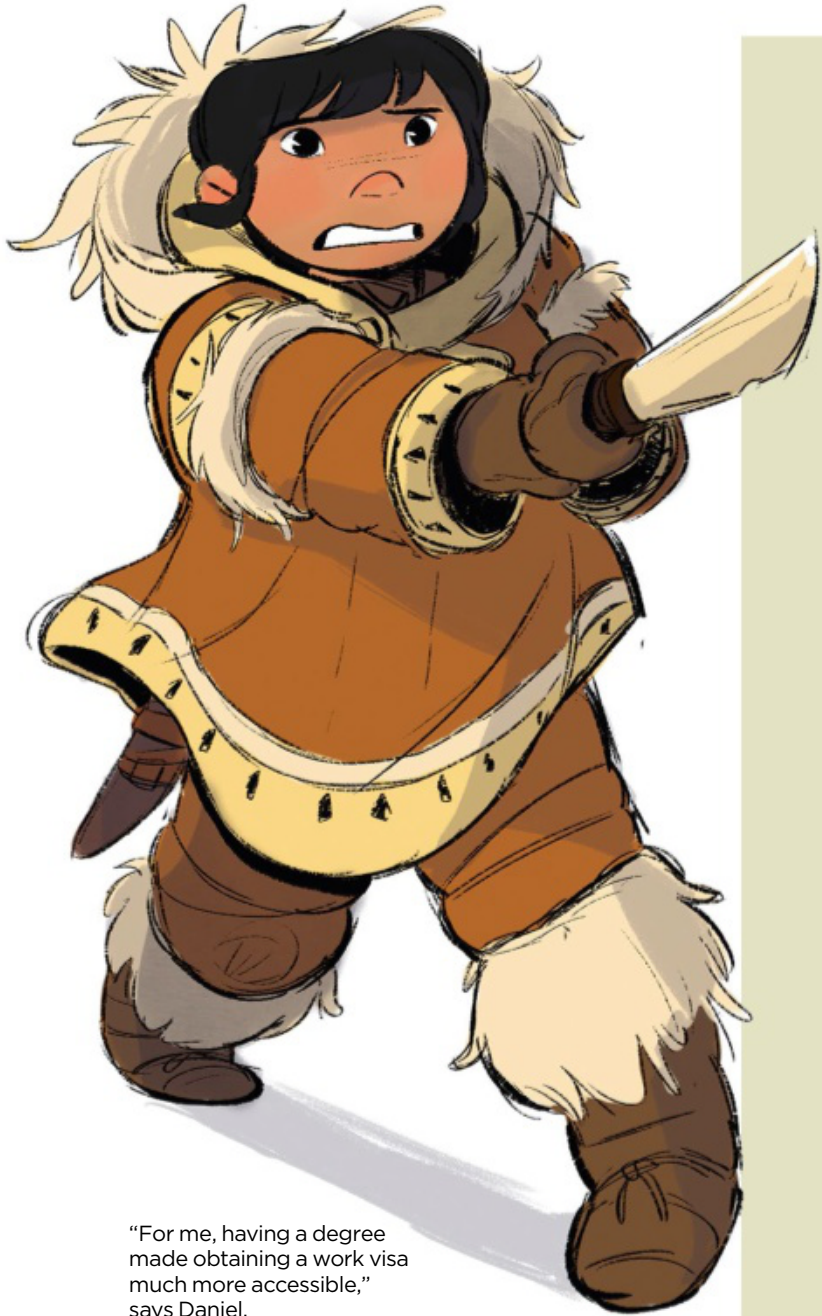
students, who act as your support system for years to come," he says.

In truth, though, for most students it's not a case of choosing between two directions, but a mixture of both. Those in academia will supplement their courses with online learning, while going the self-teaching route doesn't necessarily mean taking a scattergun, isolated approach. Some online courses are pretty close to those offered by traditional universities.

Take CG Spectrum, which offers courses in animation, VFX and game design. "We offer specialised online education taught by award-winning mentors who are working in the industry, so you're being taught by the very best," says Nick. "Our courses are

“ We cut out all the noise and only teach what's industry-relevant, so students aren't wasting their money ”





built with input from major studios, so you graduate with the skills that employers are hiring for. We cut out all the noise and only teach what's industry-relevant, so students aren't wasting their hard-earned money."

## VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

The Oatley Academy of Visual Storytelling, which helps artists further their careers in animation, illustration, games and comics, takes a similar line. As its founder, Disney artist **Chris Oatley**, says: "Although we're an online school, we offer real-time mentorships,

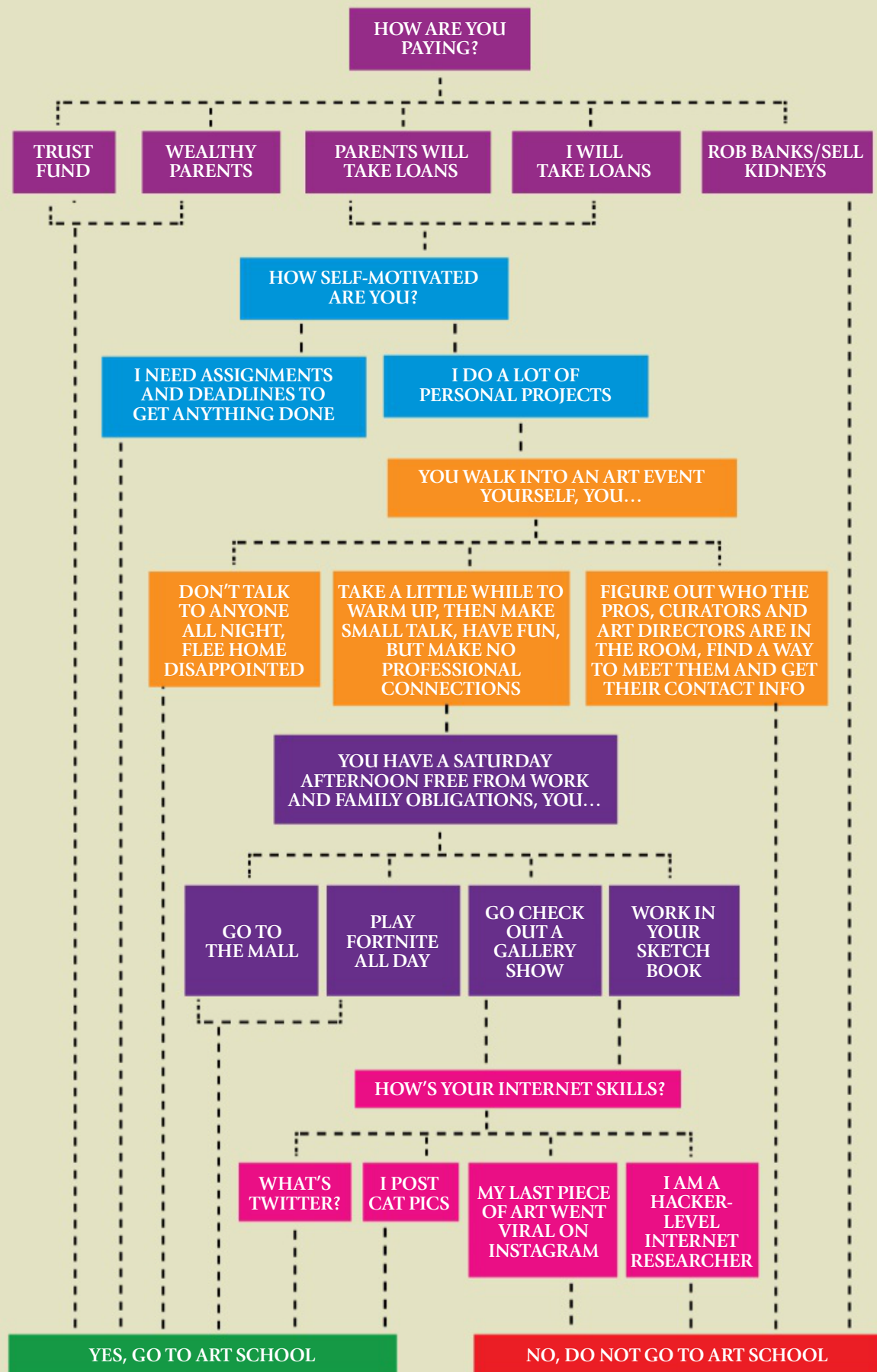


where you work with the instructor and your fellow classmates in a virtual classroom setting, just like you would in a physical school. To me, 'Physical or online?' is not the question. The question is: 'How effective is the education?'"

In general, Chris recommends what he calls a "Frankenstein approach" to art education. "Seek out the best teachers - whether online or offline - and learn from them," he advises. "It really can be that simple... and far more affordable." ●

## SHOULD I GO TO ART SCHOOL?

START HERE



BUT REMEMBER TO DRAIN EVERY DROP OUT OF THE EXPERIENCE

PICK THREE OR MORE

- SELF-STUDY WITH BOOKS AND VIDEOS
- ART TALKS AND GALLERY OPENINGS
- SEMINARS AND CONVENTIONS
- ONLINE CLASSES
- ONLINE MENTORSHIPS
- ART-RELATED JOBS
- ATELIERS
- INTERNSHIP
- BE A STUDIO ASSISTANT

Lauren Panepinto created this flow chart for the art and advice website Muddy Colors.



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Bobby Chiu expects attendees to leave with "their brains ready to burst with newfound knowledge, techniques, and skills."



It's not all work for Bobby. "I'm most looking forward to seeing all my amazing friends and artistic heroes in one place!"

Bobby. "When we come together as one community, we empower each other and I believe great things will happen as a result."

One artist tabling at the event is character designer **Brittany Myers**, who wanted to attend LightBox Expo as an artist exhibitor after seeing creators post about the event online. "I'm excited to see something so fresh take off," says Brittany. "I can't believe the amount of talent attending, and I can't wait to see so many of my favourite artists. Almost any inspiring name you could possibly think of will be there and I'm excited to be attending its first run!"

Buy your ticket now by visiting [www.lightboxexpo.com](http://www.lightboxexpo.com).

A diverse set of industry professionals has got Brittany excited: "I think Lightbox will have a fresh new vibe catering to the artists."

## Get ready for LightBox Expo

**Come together** Founder Bobby Chiu reveals why LightBox Expo is set to be an art event like no other



"Now more than ever, artists are moving from one end of the entertainment industry to another," says **Bobby**

**Chiu**, one of the founders of LightBox Expo. The event, which will take place on 6-8 September at California's Pasadena Convention Center, aims to unite leading artists and celebrate lesser-known creators.

Boasting more than 250 guests, LightBox Expo's impressive and

diverse lineup includes the likes of Craig Mullins, Karla Ortiz, Loish and Ian McCaig. "They run right across the spectrum of the industry and will be the densest group of top-level artists under one roof," says Bobby.

Attendees will be treated to portfolio reviews, panels, instructed life drawing and much more. "However, the thing I'm most looking forward to at LightBox Expo is bringing artists from around the world together and letting them mix," adds

“The thing I’m most looking forward to at LightBox Expo is bringing artists from around the world together”







## Betsy Bauer

**Nature lover** This Los Angeles-based artist invites us into her book-laden studio, where cuddly beasts and lots of wall art spark creativity



**Let me first say that everything you see here is a lie - this is the absolute cleanest my studio has ever been or ever will be. However, what I lack in physical organisation, I try to make up in time management.**

I've been an in-house visual development artist at DreamWorks Animation TV on a Guillermo del Toro project for the past two years, and time for personal work or freelance in my home studio is limited. I tend to get

up between 5 and 6am every day and aim to get two solid hours in, before heading into the office. I know that I must seem like an alien for being such an early bird rather than the typical creative night owl, but I've found that those focused morning hours buy me much more productivity than two strained hours after a full day at work.

Living in southern California is such a doubled-edged sword because - hooray! - the weather is almost always beautiful and sunny. However, that means that if I'm working on a

Often, if I'm not sure what to draw, I draw a tiger. The contrast in their fur pattern makes them an interesting subject to explore.



Here, I'm working on a piece for an upcoming Game of Thrones tribute show with Spoke Art. The Stark women are some of my favourite characters.







# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



I share my office space with my boyfriend Eric. He's a big art collector and movie buff, so he makes me look like I have better taste than I actually do!



Unique lighting, monsters, kids and forests are some of my favourite topics to paint, and I combined all three in this image for an extra-curricular work project with some old coworkers.





“What I lack in physical organisation, I try to make up in time management”



My messy, messy book case. I really need to organise this. Over on the left are some old sketchbooks that I've managed to archive in Itoya Art Portfolios. To the right is a portion of my ever-growing collection of art books with a few collector's toys up top!

Okay, full disclosure, these belong to my boyfriend's, but I love them. We're both fans of the Tiki aesthetic, and displaying these mugs has been a neat way to make the office feel fun and tropical. One of our favourite Sunday spots is happy hour at a local Tiki bar/steak house that's been around for over 50 years!



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



➡➡ weekend I end up staring longingly out my window, wishing I could be outside soaking up some vitamin D.

## TAKING NATURE CAPTIVE

Something that's helped me with this struggle is getting into houseplants. I love my giant *Monstera deliciosa*, and keep picking up random succulents every time I go to the grocery store. Taking a bit of nature captive has made a huge difference. That, and taking breaks to actually go outdoors to walk my dog Kobie.

I work on a 24-inch Wacom Cintiq Pro and a 27-inch iMac. I've experimented with a few mobile setups over the years to help solve my restlessness, but ultimately have found that nothing really replaces my large, desktop Cintiq. I did buy the base model iPad last summer once Apple introduced Pencil to the cheaper, non-pro model, and working in Procreate has been a great tool for early concept sketches and life drawing and painting. I also invested in a Jarvis standing

My first job in LA was at Paramount on a movie called *Wonder Park*. It was finally released this year, and I was delighted to find that a few of the things I designed for the film had been turned into toys. I can't get over how cool it is to buy something at the store and hold in my hand when it was once just an idea in my head.

Reading children's books was something that sparked my creativity early on, and I'm still an avid reader!



My cat Pumpkin was by my side for 16 years, and passed away about seven years ago. She was such a sweet kitty. I keep her ashes at my desk – in a way she's still with me, inspiring me to draw.

desk, which helps with occasional low back pain and antsy feet.

What probably overruns my office more than anything else is books. I kept telling myself, "There's no more shelf space!" Instead, I bought a new book case. My initial addiction was the 'art of' books put out by big animation studios. Then I discovered European comics, and then the US publishing industry also had a boom in graphic novels. Not to mention all of my old sketchbooks. At this rate I'll have to get a second office just for books!

*Betsy is a writer and illustrator for the publishing and animation industries based in Burbank, California. She's worked with companies such as DreamWorks, Paramount, Sony, Nickelodeon, Mattel and Google, to name a few. There's more of her art at [www.betsybauerart.com](http://www.betsybauerart.com).*

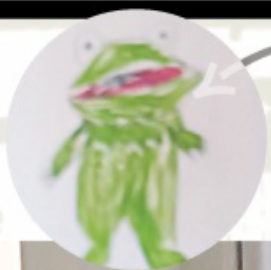


This is Eric's desk, where he often catalogues and archives WWII photos he finds on eBay. The art on the walls is a mix, featuring work by Nicole Gustaffson and Tyler Stout. The Star Wars helmet came with the purchase of a car.





# Artist news, software & events



I recently came across this very early childhood drawing of Kermit the Frog. The shapes are so good that I think sometimes we make freer and more interesting decisions when we're kids.

Fellow DreamWorker David DePasquale made these incredible tiger darumas last autumn and I couldn't help but buy one. This little buddy is keeping me honest for a long-term art project I'm going to finish one of these days!

I went to Japan for my 30th birthday and had to visit the Studio Ghibli Museum. I couldn't leave without buying something, and this soot sprite was the perfect stowaway.



I like keeping a tin of Altoids at my desk. I don't know why, but if I'm having a hard time focusing, sometimes eating a "curiously strong" mint helps reset my brain.

This is my Wacom Cintiq Pro 24-inch and 27-inch Apple iMac. I recently upgraded both of these from the Wacom Mobile Studio pro. I thought the MSP was a great machine, but I just missed the extra screen space and the Mac OS.

For a very long time I never trusted myself to keep a real plant alive, so I have a couple of fake plastic Ikea plants around to add a touch of green. I have since become a more responsible adult and upgraded to the real thing!

I pay for an annual membership to the LA zoo in the hope that I'll go there for regular sketching sessions, and rarely do I make it more than once a year. At least I'm sent get these cute stuffed toys as a free gift!

I decided to buy a nice camera before I took my last couple of trips, and so far my Fujifilm XT-1 has been to Ireland and Japan. Photography is a fun hobby: I can make an appealing composition with just the push of a button.



Here's just a tiny snippet of my overly stuffed bookcase. Favourites include my French/Spanish comics by Kerascoët, Manu Arenas and Enrique Fernandez. Some of the picture books you see, like the Lion King book, literally came from my childhood bedroom.



I adopted my boxer-mix Kobie when I was just out of college, and he's now lived in three different US states, at least half a dozen apartments/houses, and has been inside companies like Google, Paramount and DreamWorks. He's been a constant companion for the past (almost) eight years, and I couldn't ask for a better work buddy!



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# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on [claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England



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### Stealing from artists!

Please never stop the Artist in Residence feature! It's the page that I turn to first when my copy of the magazine arrives. I don't have a massive art studio like the ones you feature, but I have still managed to steal some ideas from your featured artists. I immediately adopted Julie Beck's peg board idea to hang things on [issue 153] and I now have a forest of plants in my workspace after seeing Almu Redondo's green paradise she created round her desk [issue 166]. DON'T EVER STOP!

**Grace Aston, via email**

**Claire replies** Grace, I've long admitted that Artist in Residence is a favourite of mine, too. And you're not the first person to tell me you stole Julie's peg board idea (I think she got the idea from Pinterest!), because it's such a good one. I not only love seeing where they create, but also I like



### DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?

Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit <https://ifxm.ag/ifx-174>.

Grace was inspired by the ideas on show in these two recent Artist in Residence articles. And she's not alone!



The imaginative creatures on show in Natalie Russo's FXPosé entry caught the eye of reader Eleanor.

reading about their day and how they juggle the many demands of the job. We won't get rid of Artist in Residence. Not on my watch, anyway!

### Unusual creatures

Just writing to say how refreshing it was to see Natalie Russo's wonderful creature art in the FXPosé section this month [issue 173]. So different to what's usually there, however clever and accomplished the 'usual' is! I also appreciate the increased exposure of traditional art tools. Those and digital rendering are not competitors, but gifts to enjoy. Wonderful magazine!

**Eleanor Patrick, via email**

**Claire replies** Eleanor, I will pass on your praise to Natalie Russo, as she is the one who deserves to hear your kind words. I loved the delicacy of her translucent neon jellyfish. I agree with you on digital and traditional art not being competitors. I really think each medium not only complements each other, but also can give artists insight into improving their technique.

### How much to submit to your magazine?

I'm an animator, painter and illustrator. I saw your magazine on Instagram, and noticed that you wrote about submitting artwork to your magazine. How do I do it? Is it free?

**Talieh Vafamehr, via email**

**Claire replies** Hello Talieh, I'm glad that you found us via Instagram. We love it there because there are so many inspiring artists to follow (for those who have yet to follow us, search for [@imaginefxmagazine](https://www.instagram.com/imaginefxmagazine)).

If you want to be featured in our Fresh Paint section (see right) or if you wish to alert us to your latest artwork or general greatness, please use the #imaginefx hashtag. If you would like to feature in our FXPosé section, we have an online list of requirements for submissions. Visit <http://ifxm.ag/getinifx>. And no, there is absolutely no fee for appearing in ImagineFX.

## FRESH PAINT

New works that have grabbed our attention



**Katee**  
[@poopikat](https://www.instagram.com/poopikat)



**Fenecca**  
[@fenecca](https://www.instagram.com/fenecca)



**Debbi**  
[@debbi\\_elizabeth](https://www.instagram.com/debbi_elizabeth)

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!



# Legend



## YOUNG NALA

"Like an actor, I was 'cast' to play the part of young Nala in The Lion King."

All imagery for The Lion King © Disney



ImagineFX July 2019



## MARA BROTHERS

"This is a digital piece showing a pair of male lions running through Kenya's Masai Mara national park."



ImagineFX  
LEGEND

# Aaron Blaise

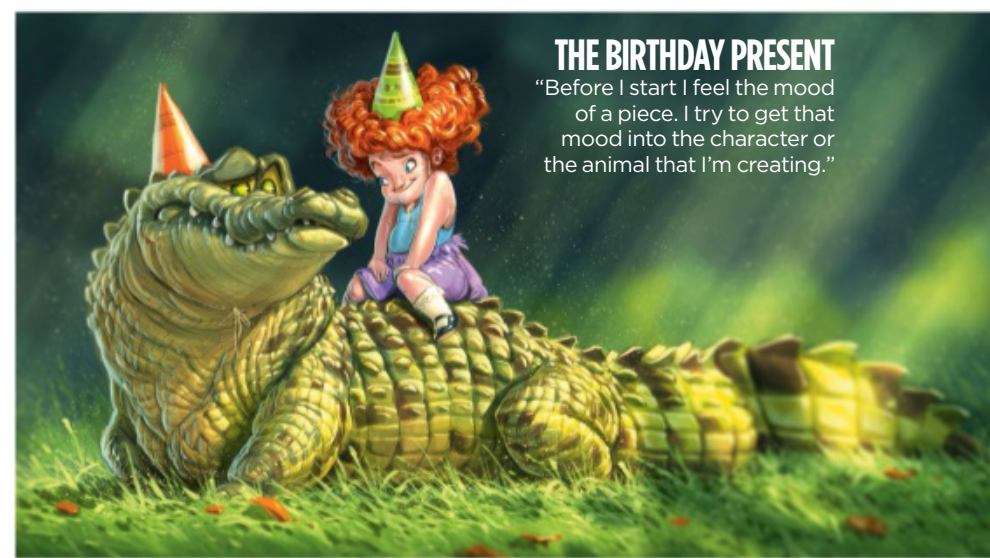
The American animator tells **Gary Evans** about the glory days at Disney... and why he had to quit his dream job

**E**ver wondered what it was like working at Disney during the 1990s? Aaron Blaise tells a good story about that time. He'd just finished Aladdin (1992) – the movie before was Beauty and the Beast (1991). Disney was on one of the great streaks in cinema history. It began with The Little Mermaid (1989), ended with Tarzan (1999), and included many of the biggest animated films of all time.

Aaron was promoted to supervising animator on The Lion King (1994). He

was in charge of his own character, Simba's best friend, the young Nala. The anatomy had to be perfect. This lion cub needed to move the way that lion cubs really move. So Aaron went to a kind of workshop, a kind of figure-drawing class, the kind of thing that could only happen at Disney during the 1990s.

These were different times. No internet, no video conferencing, no emailing images back and forth. Aaron worked at the Disney studio in Florida, but the California studio was also working on the movie. That's a whole country, a whole timezone apart. Aaron photocopied his designs, numbered them and sent them by courier to Los Angeles. It was the same with tapes of animation. Meetings



## THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

"Before I start I feel the mood of a piece. I try to get that mood into the character or the animal that I'm creating."

with directors took place on the phone the following day when the stuff arrived. By then, Aaron was on to something else. If things needed amending, he had to switch back to the previous design or animated clip. So a full week's work might have equalled only a few seconds of finished movie; one or two shots. A film like The Lion King was 90 minutes long and contained 4,000 shots. ➡

“These were different times. No video conferencing, no emailed images, no internet”

## Artist PROFILE

### Aaron Blaise



**LOCATION:** US  
**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Robert Bateman, Guy Coheleach, Jeremy Lipking, Joaquín Sorolla and John Singer Sargent

**MEDIA USED:** Photoshop, TVPaint Animation, watercolour, charcoal, acrylic, oil

**WEB:** [www.creatureartteacher.com](http://www.creatureartteacher.com)



➡➡ Before he could begin, Aaron needed to know the script inside-out. He needed to make sure that his designs matched up with the art director's vision. And he needed Nala to be believable: a character, not a caricature. That, he says, was what Disney did well: it made believable characters by "pulling from reality."

So how did Aaron go about creating a believable lion? At Disney, during the 1990s, it was done like this: "We would draw them from life," Aaron says. "They would bring the lions right into the studio for us. They'd walk them back and forth across the stage, and we would analyse their movements and anatomy, and everything else, and get it down on paper."

## WILD CHILD

Aaron grew up in Florida. His family lived in little trailer north of the Everglades, near a place called Corkscrew Swamp. He was "a wild child" who never wore shoes or a shirt and was often covered with ticks. Florida was his own private paradise.

He always drew and painted, but he couldn't see anyway of making a living from it. Then, aged 17, Aaron's home burned down. Things got "a little rough." He was ready to give up art and get a job in forestry. But Aaron's stepdad persuaded him not to waste his ability.

Aaron graduated with a certificate in illustration from the Ringling College



of Art in 1989. His first professional job, aged 20, was an internship at Disney. There was just one problem: he couldn't animate. He knew drawing, he was good at that. But he couldn't get his head around movement. He had this dream job, but he almost quit.

Then mentor Glen Keane told him: 'Keep trying. It's going to happen. It's going to happen.' And then three weeks later, it happened, it clicked, and seemingly out of nowhere Aaron understood arcs and timing, and slow-

## MARA RIVER HIPPO

"This oil painting shows a hippo in the Mara river that runs through Kenya and Tanzania."

ins and all this other technical stuff. "I could see it happening in my head just because I was living it, breathing it, dreaming about it."

He went full-time at 21 and worked his way up to director, earning an Oscar nomination for *Brother Bear* (2003). Then Disney's great streak came to an end. It closed the studio in Florida which employed 365 people. Everybody was laid off except Aaron and nine others, who were then moved to California.

"Things change," Aaron says. "The market changed, the finances for things changed. It was very hard to see my friends and people that I had grown up with, spent the past 20 years with, to see them all of a suddenly ➡➡"

“They would bring the lions into the studio and we would analyse their movements”

## DEEP DARKS AND BRIGHT HIGHLIGHTS

Aaron talks through the creative process behind one of his large-format charcoal drawings



### ROUGH SKETCH

"When starting my large charcoal pieces, I like to start by drawing in the image roughly. This is where I'm finding the proportion and compositions."



### ATTENTION TO DETAIL

"After the rough stage, I rub the entire drawing down so that it can then be refined. This is where I focus on the details of the drawing."



### CHARCOAL POWDER

"Then I rub the image with charcoal powder to create a streaky tone over everything. It's after this stage that I start to draw with my eraser by pulling out highlights."





## DARKS AND HIGHLIGHTS

"Once the highlights have been pulled out with the eraser, it's then time to add deep darks and bright highlights. This is where my 4B charcoal pencil and my white charcoal pencil come in."

## LIGHT AND DARK

"I continue to work back and forth between the light and dark areas of the piece until I'm happy to call it finished."





➤ without a job and scattered to the four winds. And so that was my first big blow."

Aaron, his wife Karen and their kids all moved to California. They started over and pretty soon Aaron was making movies again. Then Karen was diagnosed with breast cancer. Disney helped Aaron set up shop at home. Some co-workers joined him and he was able to work and look after Karen.

"But, ultimately," Aaron says, "two and a half years into it, on 11 March 2007, she passed away in my arms, and that was a devastating blow for me. I mention this a lot in my talks: how you need to be driven to do your work. And, after I lost Karen, I lost my drive. She was my soulmate. She was the love of my life and I was completely lost and heartbroken and my kids were a mess as well. And so trying to go back to work with that mental baggage and heartache and pain, and trying to make a movie and direct those people, for me, it was almost impossible. It was impossible."

## LOSING MY IDENTITY

Aaron stuck it out for a couple of years. But his desire was gone. Studio bosses removed him from the movie he was working on and said he was done as a director. They wanted him to stay with Disney in another role. Aaron quit.

"It was the most difficult and scary decision I've ever made in my life because I didn't know anything other than Disney. My whole identity was my family and Disney, and Disney was falling apart, and my family was falling apart. So I was losing my identity."

What did he do next? First, he went home and he panicked. Aaron had a



### THE GLUTTON

"Here's a gluttonous grizzly bear hunting for salmon and unwilling to share his catch."

big mortgage but no longer had the director's big salary to pay for it. Next day, he went into work and cleaned out his desk. There was a job offer waiting for him – in Florida. "It was unbelievable, the timing of it all."

The company was Digital Domain, a visual effects and digital production company. Director James Cameron was one of the founders. Still, this wasn't Disney. There would be no lions brought in for figure-drawing classes. Aaron was three years into a movie when the company went bankrupt. He was jobless again.

The artist considered going back to Disney. Then he got thinking about the way Glen Keane used to push young artists. He wanted to do something

similar. Aaron and business partner Nick Burch came up with CreatureArtTeacher.com, offering lessons and tutorials based on Aaron's long and illustrious career. "I decided that I really didn't want to place my career – my future – in the hands of any executives anymore. I wanted to be the director of my own life."

Aaron works digitally and in most traditional mediums. From Alaska to Africa, he's photographing wildlife for reference. It's important to see subjects in person. Working traditionally, he starts with thumbnail sketches to figure out composition. He draws the image on to the canvas, tones the canvas, then works through the rendering. But digital's different.

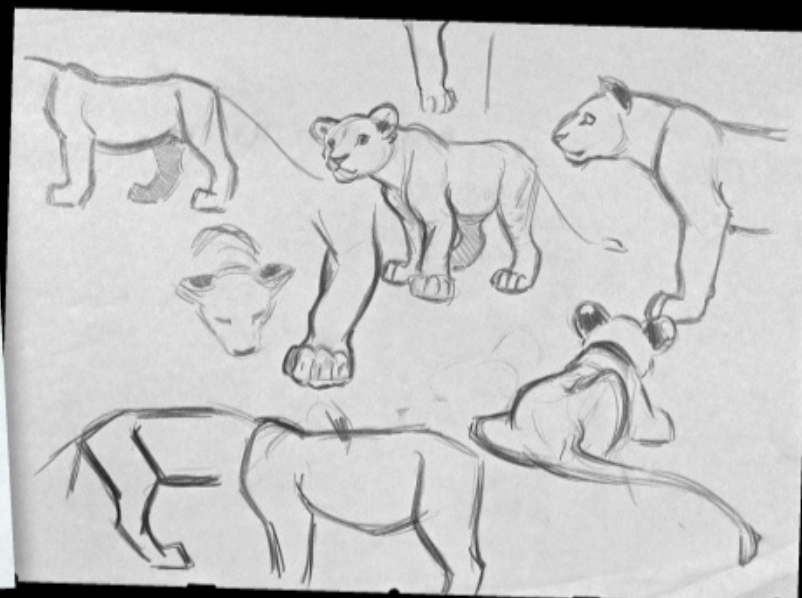
## QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE

See how Aaron created Nala for The Lion King



### REAL LIONS

"Disney brought real lions into the studio so we could sketch how they look and move."







## INDIAN RHINO

"This digital piece is personal character work, looking at the Indian rhino, which is a vulnerable species."



Sometimes he sits down to draw without knowing where it's going to go. This brings another dimension to his work. Working digitally helps him find compositions he would never have found working traditionally.

## MEMENTO FROM DISNEY

His studio is at home: a small room that's divided into two spaces. One side is for digital work, comprising a desk, Mac Pro, Cintiq 32-inch and a couple of monitors. He uses Photoshop

and TVPaint Animation. These days, all animations are done digitally. But he keeps his old desk from Disney – the very desk he used working on all those great movies. He uses it for painting with watercolours now.

Aaron's traditional setup continues with an easel for working with oil, acrylics and charcoal. There's a large bookcase that's full of books, and lights and cameras used for shooting video lessons. Twice a week, he does a live-stream show with his son Nick.

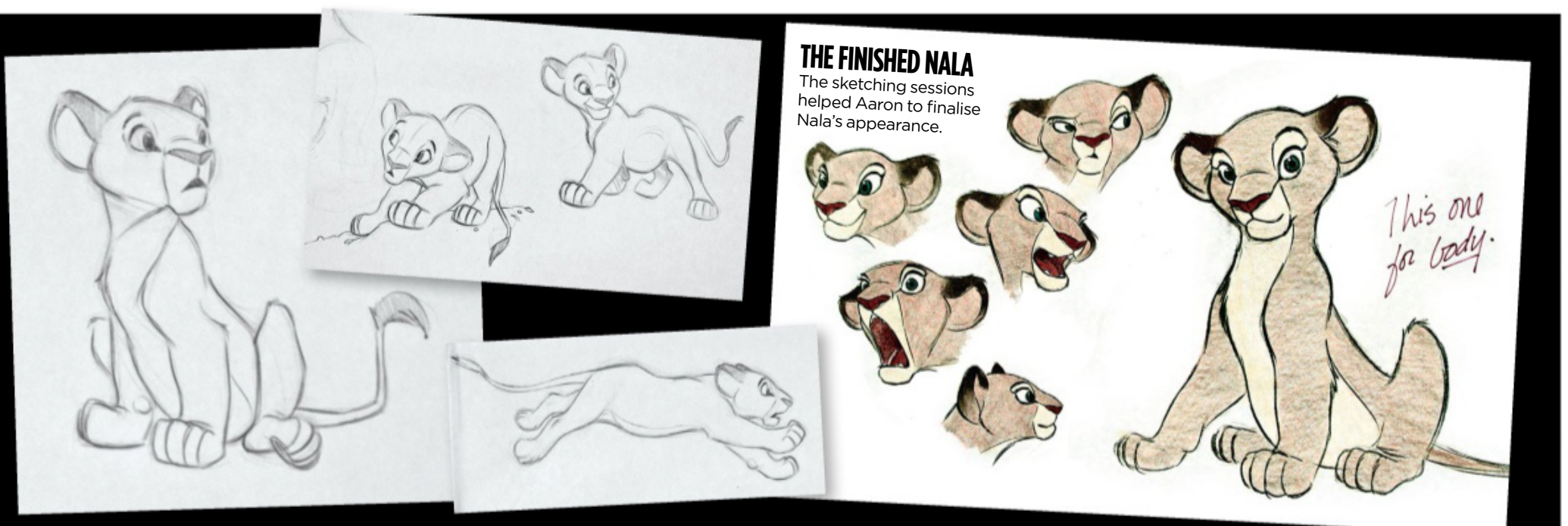
## BEST FRIENDS

"A lion and tiger cosying up to one another. I designed a lion cub for The Lion King and a tiger for Aladdin."

Routine is important. These days, he's at his desk at 10am. He could be painting, drawing digitally, making a video or working on lessons his teaching courses. But he sticks at it until he's "mentally spent." Could be a couple of hours, could be 10 hours. The thing is to be working consistently every weekday. Being his own boss takes a lot more discipline than the structured nine to five at Disney. So does he ever regret leaving? Would he do anything differently?

People often describe Aaron's art as Disney-esque. He doesn't mind. He started at the studio when he was 20 and left when he was 42. Disney was a big part of his life. But his time there went hand in hand with the biggest ➡

“I decided that I really didn't want to place my career – my future – in the hands of any executives anymore”





## “I NEED A CINTIQ AND PHOTOSHOP IN MY OFFICE”

Aaron couldn't get studio execs excited about his film. It was time to make the leap into digital...

“I was working on a film called the King of the Elves and everything I was doing was still traditional. But the film was going to be digital, a 3D film, with a very photo-realistic look. I was having a hard time getting the executives to see what I saw in my head from these little watercolour sketches. They couldn't make the leap. I realised: ‘Okay, this thing that I had been fearing for years, this digital world, I'm going to have to get over that fear.’

Luckily for me, I was working for Disney. I said: ‘I need a Cintiq and Photoshop in my office.’ Next day, they were there. I had a friend of mine, Andy Harkness, one of the art directors on Moana, show me how to use it. ‘How do I open a document? How do I draw in layers?’ All this kind of stuff.

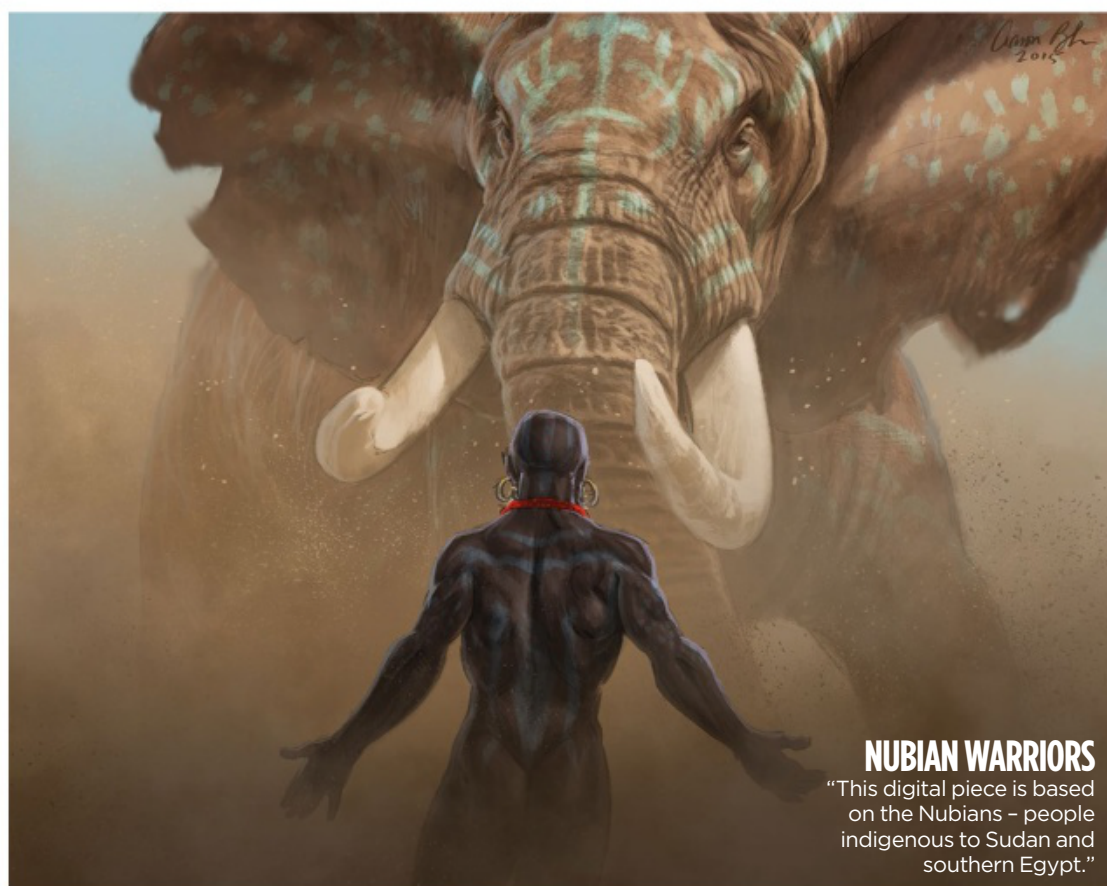
I sat and worked probably for 12 hours straight just doing drawing after drawing. I was so enamoured with this new medium. I didn't put it down for weeks. I would dream about it, get up the next day, sit down, and just start working again. I figured out that I could bring in my own digital photographs and mix them with my paintings and create worlds and textures that I just couldn't do traditionally.

I was finally able to create worlds, images that looked like the final frame I wanted to create in the film. I started getting the executives excited about the film. Then I was pitching the movie to Steve Jobs and a few other Disney executives. At the end, Steve Jobs pointed up at one of my images up on the wall, a digital image, and he said: ‘That's the movie we want to see.’ I've never looked back since.”



### ARTIST-TURNED-TEACHER

Aaron's digital art skills have enabled him to offer a range of teaching courses through his website.



### NUBIAN WARRIORS

“This digital piece is based on the Nubians – people indigenous to Sudan and southern Egypt.”



### BUTTERFLY CONTEMPLATION

“I'd thought of this painting as I was driving home from work one day. I ran straight to my studio and got going!”

“I'm able to draw, paint and animate... do whatever I want to do. But it's all because of the death of my soulmate”

part of his life. Aaron often wonders what might have been had Karen been diagnosed earlier: “If Karen had lived, then what would my life be? I can't compare it.”

Professionally, maybe he'd still be at Disney. Perhaps he'd be directing his fourth movie now. Who knows? But what he does know is that working for himself is ultimately more rewarding than working for a studio. So the short answer is no. He doesn't regret leaving Disney.

“It was probably the best decision I've ever made in my life. But, you know, it's funny, I don't know that there's anything I could do differently. I look at where I am right now, and,

creatively, I'm happier than I've ever been because I'm able to draw, paint, animate, whatever I want to do to my heart's content. But it all came about because of the death of my soulmate.

“It's a little sappy, but there's truth in this. I was thinking about my wife Karen and what she would think about me going on to do whatever I was going to do. I really felt strongly – I still do – about doing something that she would be proud of, that she would want to do, that would drive her, because she was always this very giving, loving individual. And so that was also a big part of our decision-making process in creating CreatureArtTeacher.com.”



# Interview Aaron Blaise

## CECIL THE LION

"Painted in honour of Cecil, the lion that made the news after being killed by a big-game hunter in 2015."





## Max Ulichney

Nothing floats this artist and animator's boat more than people watching – and then immortalising them in his sketch book

### Artist **PROFILE**

**Max Ulichney**

LOCATION: US



Max works as an animation art director and visual development artist, and has a background in CG.

He has years of experience working as a caricature artist, and tells us that capturing a candid likeness in a moment at a café or bar remains a favourite past time of his. These days most of his illustration work is done on an iPad in Procreate using his range of custom 'MaxPacks' brushes.

[www.maxulichney.com](http://www.maxulichney.com)

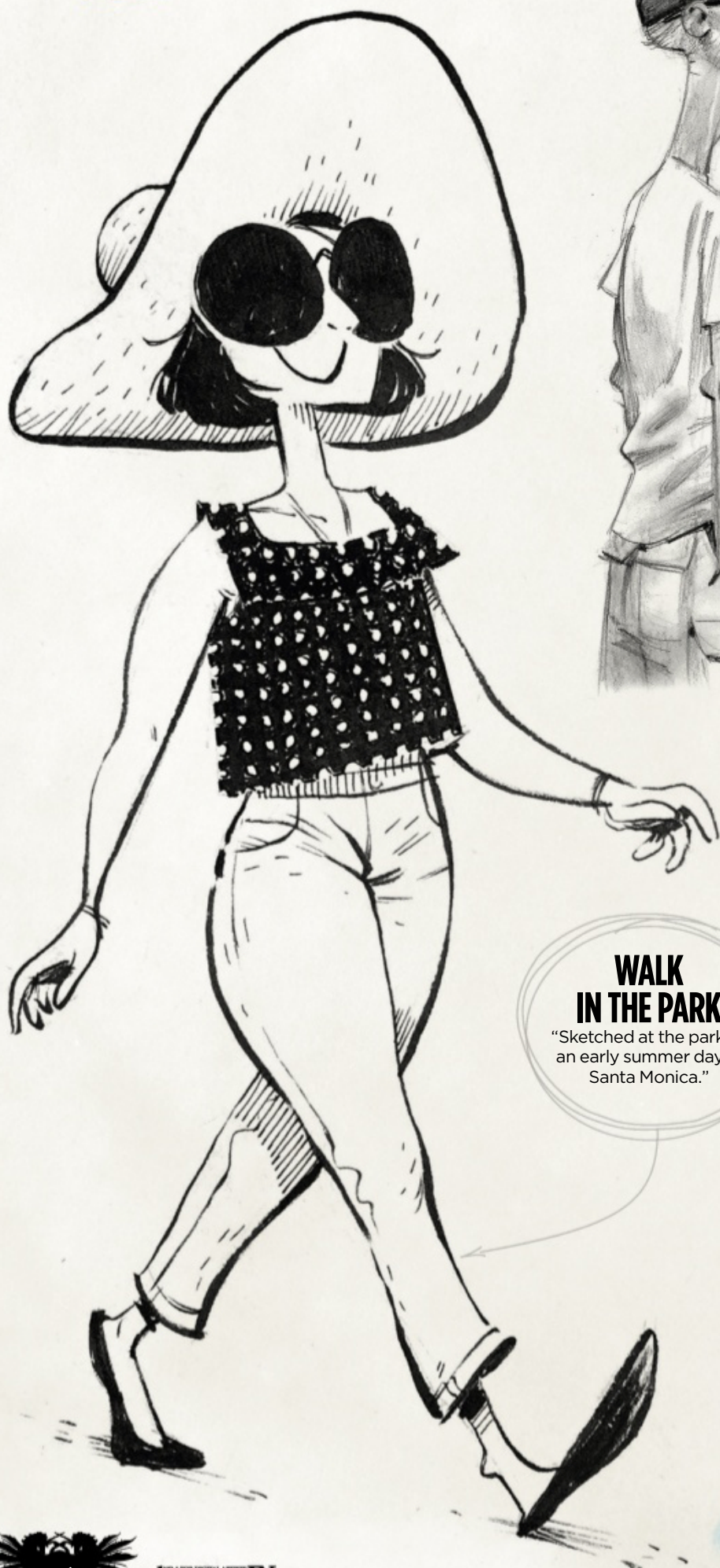
### CAFÉ TURTLE

"One of my favourite café sketches, drawn with a 9B pencil in my Moleskine."



### WALK IN THE PARK

"Sketched at the park on an early summer day in Santa Monica."



### CTNX GUY

"I quickly captured this guy from my booth at the animation expo."







## MOD

"I was inspired by 60s mod culture and the idea of a put-together stranger with secrets. The tangents and primitive shapes add tension."

“I was inspired by 60s mods and the idea of a stranger with secrets”



## SNORT

"This is one of my best friend's dogs. Drawn from a particularly stylish photo."



## UPPERCLASSGATOR

"I especially enjoyed playing with the short limbs and long torso of this preppy predator."



# Sketchbook

## MANE MAN

"This hair brought his human to the bar and I had no choice but to sketch them both."

“This hair brought his human to the bar...”

## HIPSTER FINALIST

"I pushed strong geometric primary shapes and a few intentional tangents for structure."



## BLUES MAN

"This was scratched in live with a giant parallel pen to capture the energy and grittiness of the subject."





## GUARDIAN ANGEL

"I like using aggressive brushes, such as in this sketch. It forces me to make careful, expressive marks."



# Sketchbook

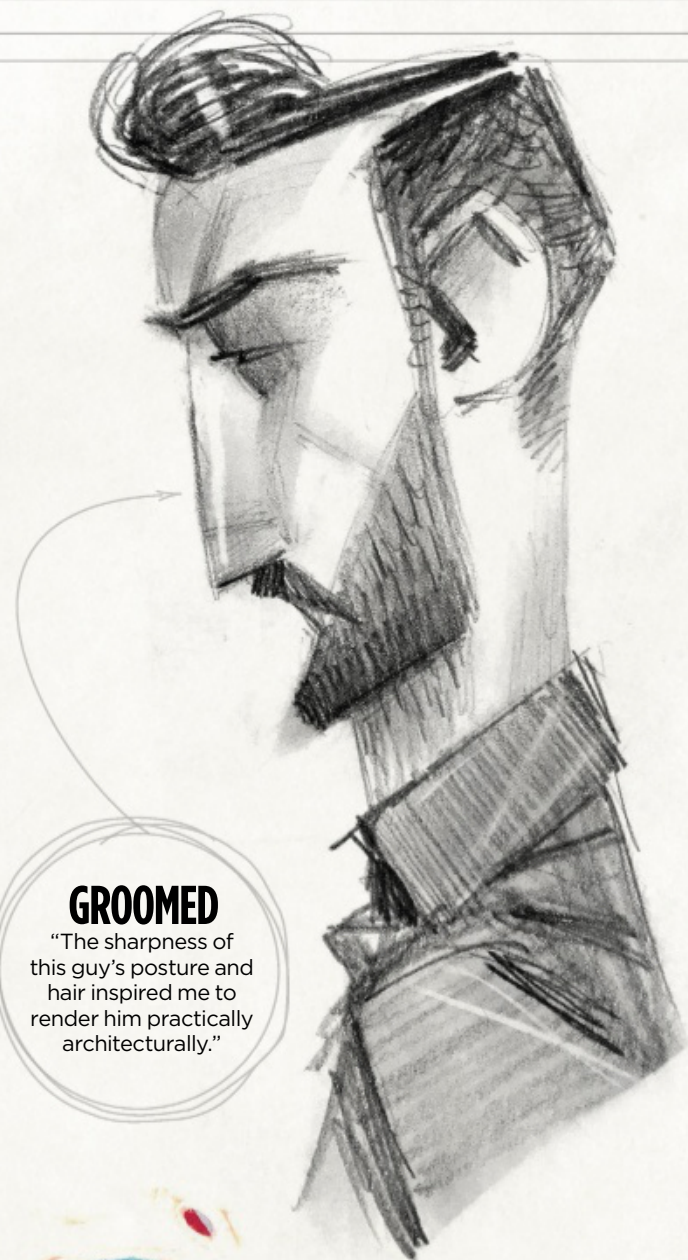
## RETIREMENT

"Just having fun with skin tone and texture. Painted using my own digital inks and coloured pencils."



## GROOMED

"The sharpness of this guy's posture and hair inspired me to render him practically architecturally."



“I tried to keep the anatomy strongly indicated without losing any of the energy”

## PAYING HIS DUES

"This poor guy was having a hard day, clearly overwhelmed while making a coffee run for the team."

## SQUARE JAW

"Caricature from life. I tried to keep the anatomy strongly indicated without losing energy."





## SNAPE

"Alan Rickman is a favourite of mine. His is a very difficult likeness to capture."



## CROSSWALK GIRL

"Sketched from memory a few hours after I saw her in the neighbourhood."

## AIRPORT COWBOY

"This guy was checking the arrivals screen while I waited to board a flight at LAX."



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There's a host of top-level comic art talent this issue. We talk to Jorge Jimenez and Christian Ward, Tony S Daniel creates our cover art, Jen Bartel paints Captain Marvel and Tess Fowler presents her essential inking tips!



### Issue 173 May 2019

In space no one can hear you whoop at our film art issue, with its Alien-themed cover by Kevin McGivern, interviews with Blade Runner 2049 concept artist Mike Hill, Marvel Studios' Anthony Francisco and much more!



### Issue 172 April 2019

Our manga issue has gorgeous cover art by Asia Ladowska, an interview with US illustrator Sachin Teng, 15 tips for improving your creature designs, and a reimagination of Asuka from Neon Genesis Evangelion.



### Issue 171 March 2019

Audra Auclair creates our compelling cover art in Procreate. You'll also get composition and anatomy advice, plus we explore ways to avoid a creative crash, talk to VR guru Goro Fujita, and pore over Loish's sketchbook.

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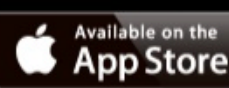


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\*Resource files are available from issue 85 onwards.





## Artist Portfolio

# FLORIAN SATZINGER

This Austrian artist has drawn some of the world's most iconic animated characters. **Gary Evans** finds out more about his 'fusion cuisine' art style...

**F**lorian Satzinger worked hard on a background layout: two giant trees framing a little creek. It looked good, and Florian was proud of the piece. The Austrian took it to one of the special instructors at the Vancouver Institute of Media Arts where he was studying hand-drawn animation. His instructor, Ken Southworth, looked at the layout and shook his head.

Every component did look good. They had turned out well. But the composition was wrong because the trees were too similar. The background didn't look like an animation layout. It was more like a greeting card. "Now," Ken said. "What's next? Do you want to go for the greeting card or the animation layout, son?"

Florian grew up on old Disney animated films: classics like *The*

*Rescuers* (1977), *The Sword in the Stone* (1963), and *101 Dalmatians* (1961). He loved TV cartoons – *The Pink Panther Show*, *Looney Tunes*, *Tom & Jerry*. He drew the things he saw on the screen. Many kids do. But Florian was doing something a bit different. His dad was an architect. From a young age, Florian knew all about perspective and other advanced techniques. So he didn't just sketch cartoon characters, but also backgrounds, vehicles and props. This wasn't simple copying for the sake of copying. This was something else.

"Drawing, I guess, was a way to make my own ideas somehow 'real' or at least manifest on paper. And, ➔

### ICEBERG

"This is a design clean-up for a bunch of penguin characters chilling on an iceberg."



## Artist PROFILE

### Florian Satzinger

**LOCATION:** Austria

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Bruno Bozzetto, Giorgio Cavazzano, Peter de Sève, Stephen Hillenburg and Ken Southworth

**MEDIA:** Mechanical pencil, Prismacolor Col-Erase coloured pencils, Photoshop

**WEB:** [www.instagram.com/floriansatzinger](http://www.instagram.com/floriansatzinger)



“Drawing was a way to make my own ideas ‘real’ on paper”



**CLEAN-UP PIECE**

“Created using Caran d’Ache coloured pencils, this is a clean-up for a sponsored commission.”





➡ equality important, the ideas became shareable. What I'm trying to say is that, through drawing, I wasn't limited to just dreaming of the ultimate treehouse with a space rocket launch feature. Drawing enabled me to render this very treehouse visible down to the last detail, then share it with others. I think this is what got me into art in the first place. And isn't it exactly this what I'm still doing today?"

## LEARNING FROM A VETERAN ARTIST

Florian attended various universities, studying everything from art history to German philology, but the school that made a deep and lasting impression

### REX

"Design process breakdown for a space-exploring, steampunk-inspired character called Rex."

“ Ken helped me to understand the danger of complacency and the importance of constructive critiques ”

was Vancouver Institute of Media Arts. That's where Ken Southworth taught. Ken had worked for Disney Studios, Hanna-Barbera and Warner Bros. – all the companies that made Florian's favourite childhood animations. The English artist had been in the animation business since 1944. When Ken spoke, Florian listened.

Ken could teach without teaching, say something without actually saying

it. He encouraged Florian to see himself as a kind of reporter, whose job it is to observe his own characters and analyse what they do and how they behave. Ken's criticism of Florian's layout was a good example of this. What Ken was really meant was this: are you happy to make good art, or do you want try and make great art?

"In retrospect, his influence on me wasn't so much about drawing and animation skills, but about developing a good taste and a feel for balanced and original design. He helped me to understand the danger of complacency and the importance of accepting constructive critiques as a stimulus for becoming a better artist." ➡

### QUACKERS

"This is a parody painting is of a random bird-character joyriding, while dressed in a Donald Duck costume."







## HIJACK

"Here's a painting by German-American artist Albert Bierstad... hijacked by a flying-iron, shark-shaped duck marine!"

## STEAMPUNK MICKEY

Florian takes us through his design for a light-hearted steampunk parody of Mickey Mouse



### 1 ROUGH SKETCH

"In this sketch the character is imitating the on-paper-walking pose of the duck from the front page of my Paperwalker blog ([www.paperwalker.blogspot.com](http://www.paperwalker.blogspot.com)). My idea was to design a Mickey with no regard for the original. The basic shape is slim and wiry with some weird tech gimmicks."



### 2 SECOND PASS

"I changed some elements in this second pass on the artwork. Now the character is back on the ground, and I've swapped his shoes for weird foot-gloves. I've also spent a bit of time refining the initial rough sketch, and you can see that a lot of the final line-work is already in place."



### 3 EVERYTHING IN PLACE

"This is the finished piece, which was done in Photoshop. I drew this character parody after being invited to participate in Disney's Mickey Mouse: 90 Years of Magic exhibition at Desenzano's Castle on Lake Garda, Italy. Two of my original Mickey Mouse pieces were included in the exhibition."





## MASCOT

"Here's the process for a character I used to publicise a contest to design a mascot for the 2017 Special Olympics."



➡ "I remember him as somebody who wasn't teaching but rather suggesting, or helping. He made you feel that you figured a problem out by yourself, or at least in collaboration with him. I dearly miss him."

## DRAGONS AND DUCKS

Florian's first paid job was in advertising. He drew a spaceship, which was to be shaped like a milk bottle and have a face. Next, he worked on illustrations for a children's book published by a travel agency. The story was about a family making plans for their next holiday – a family of

## SNOW RODEO

"This is a process behind a couple of my ski-resort, snow-rodeo figures."

dragons. The only thing he'd ever wanted to be was an animator. There was no back-up plan. So he stuck at it.

Then, one day, 14 years ago, seemingly out of the blue, Florian received an email from a Disney executive asking if he'd like to collaborate. He would go on to work for the makers of many of his favourite childhood cartoons. He contributed to

“Directors want me to come up with interesting visual solutions or ideas” ➡



## EGON SCHIELE

"I used a self-portrait by Austrian painter Egon Schiele as a reference for this character."

Warner Bros. cult classic *Pinky and the Brain* and, like Ken, got to draw iconic Looney Tunes characters Tweety, Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny. Florian also created his own IPs: Toby Skybuckle (whose adventures are inspired on his own childhood), John Starduck (the space-exploring duck), and Duck Awesome (Florian likes ducks).

For the most part, he's commissioned to create art for the early stages of a project ("they are entrees"), so Florian's mostly left alone to do his thing: "Directors want me to come up with new things, and to find interesting visual solutions or ideas," he says. "Now, one can get the suspicion that I just get brought on board as a sort of a visual development jester. It sounds like complete freedom, but actually, the ➡





## BUTTERFLY HIJACK

"An eight-limbed character crashes into Carl Spitzweg's painting The Butterfly Catcher."



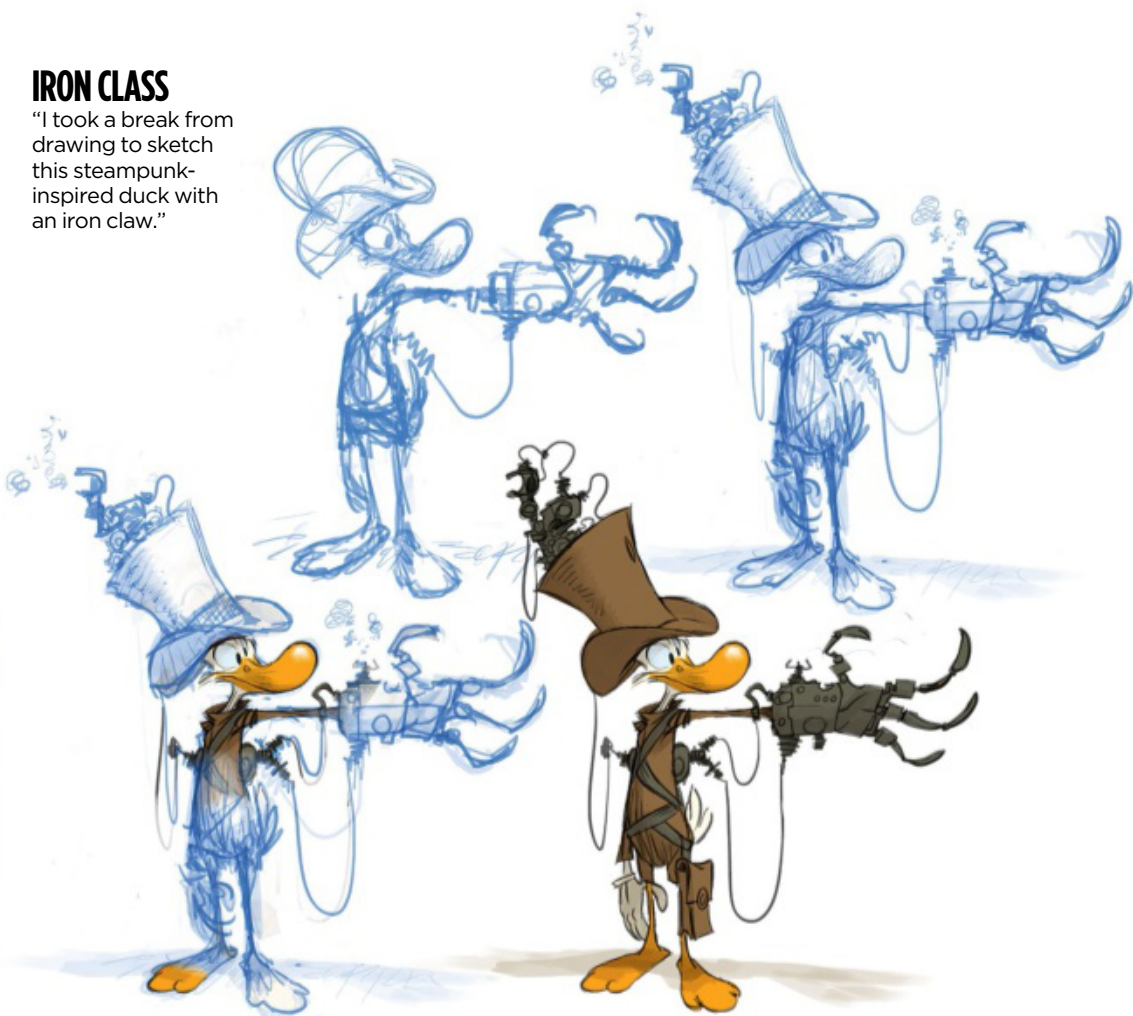
## BEARISH APE

"This is my process for developing a bear/ape character."



## IRON CLASS

"I took a break from drawing to sketch this steampunk-inspired duck with an iron claw."



## PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST

Florian talks us through the key moments of his career so far

"There were a couple of breakthrough moments of significance in career. One of them was, for sure the one – it must have been about 14 years ago, maybe even longer – when I got an email from Lenora Hume, vice-president of Disney Worldwide at that time. She told me that she came across my work on the internet and would like to talk about the possibilities of a collaboration.

Another one was my first gig with Warner Bros. Worldwide Publishing. I was tasked with poster artwork for the Looney Tunes Magazine, with some of the main characters on it: Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Sylvester, Tweety and Gossamer.

Another very special moment took place in 2009, when I was awarded with the Nemoland award in Florence, Italy. This award put me on a list of other Nemoland recipients such as Don Bluth, Gary Goldman, Eric Goldberg, Bruno Bozzetto, Mark Henn and John Canemaker.

The most recent moment was when Denis-Pierre Filippi contacted me. He's a French writer who is with Disney, and he gave me the opportunity to create something very special with him, which was totally in my style. Unfortunately I can't share any details about this right now – sorry!

I think that these kind of breakthrough moments don't stop happening, because they don't always have to be 'big whoppers'. Little feedback comments via email or on social media also make great moments, too."

➡ respective project has its key attributes and limitations of course, and so it's my responsibility to pay close attention to them."

## FROM BLURRY SHAPE TO SKETCH

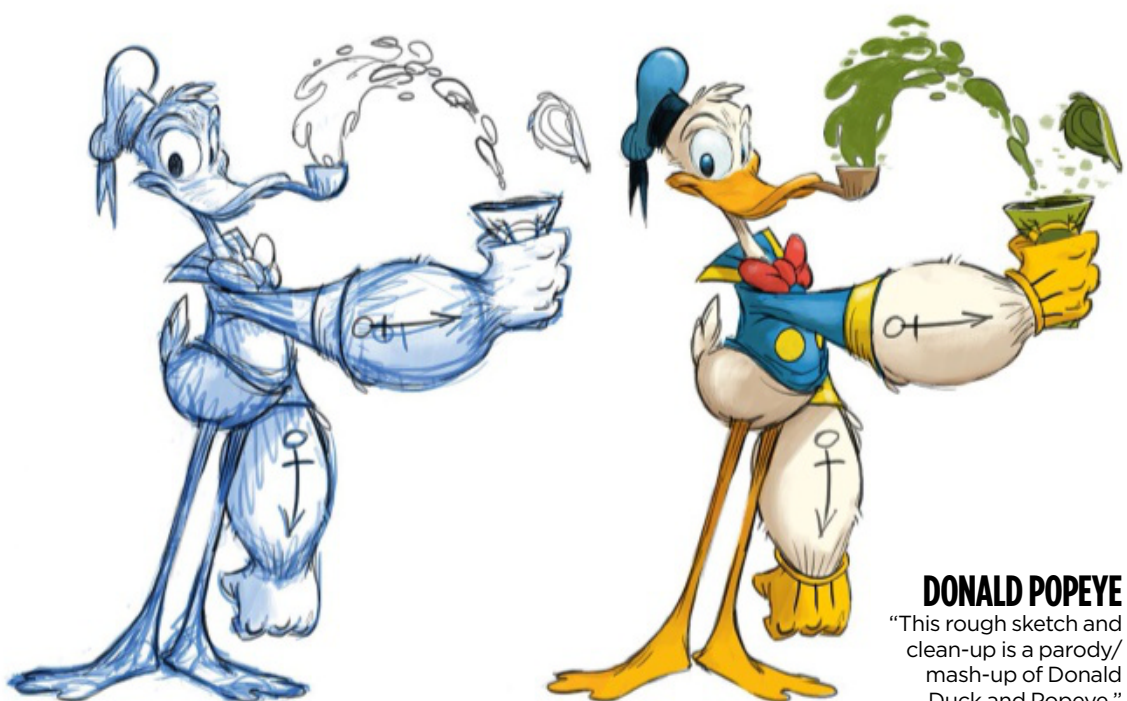
Whether it's a client brief or a personal project, a new piece always starts out as an indistinct picture in Florian's head. "Say, you commission me to design a middle-aged blue dragon who suffers from acid reflux. Immediately, there's this blurry image of this very dragon in my head. Or, more precisely, I see a blurry shape that already has a form or volume to it, but no colours.

"I would say that these images I 'see' are always a sort of grey. And now this grey dragon-form in my head is what

I try to reproduce or translate on to a 2D canvas in Photoshop, in the form of an initial rough sketch."

Florian believes in "thinking before you draw." So this rough sketch is a kind of bare-bones plan for the finished piece. It'll be small with lots of construction lines to show the character's form and volume. Florian sees sketching as 3D modelling on a 2D canvas. Once it's done, he gets going on the "regular" drawing. Layer by layer, he builds it up: line-work, shading, colour. Now he starts looking at references to get the little details right – everything from colour design to character accessories.

Florian's studio is just five minutes from his home in the city of Graz, in



## DONALD POPEYE

"This rough sketch and clean-up is a parody/mash-up of Donald Duck and Popeye."



“I’m often told that my style has a Disney feel to it, but is more zany”



southern Austria. He shares a large, bright workspace with, appropriately enough, three architects. He likes being surrounded by creative people whose work is both familiar and completely different to his own.

A good day for Florian starts with a bit of free-drawing to loosen up. Then he gets on with whatever project he’s busy with, goes home for lunch, and rarely stays at the studio later than 6pm. Evenings, he likes to get away from work – a trip to the theatre, playing badminton with his wife Laura. Routine is important. Routine helps him get things finished.

## ZANY AND ANGRY

One critic described Florian’s art as having ‘a snap and verve that harkens back to the best of classic Disney and mid-20th century Warner Bros. animation.’ His line has a ‘zing, bounce and swoop so delightful that they

### MICKY

“Here’s my Mickey Mouse parody, which appeared in an official Disney exhibition.”

suggest lively motion even before they’re animated.’

Florian describes his own work as “fusion cuisine.” It combines two of the art styles he grew up with: first, the North American style of Disney’s Walt Kelly and Don Bluth, and Chuck Jones of Warner Bros. Second, the influence of European comic artists like André Franquin, Maurice De Bevere (aka Morris) and Giorgio Cavazzano. “I often get the feedback that my style has this Disney feel to it, but more zany, or angry.”

Another influence is, of course, Ken Southworth. Florian is a teacher himself now. He holds a lectureship at

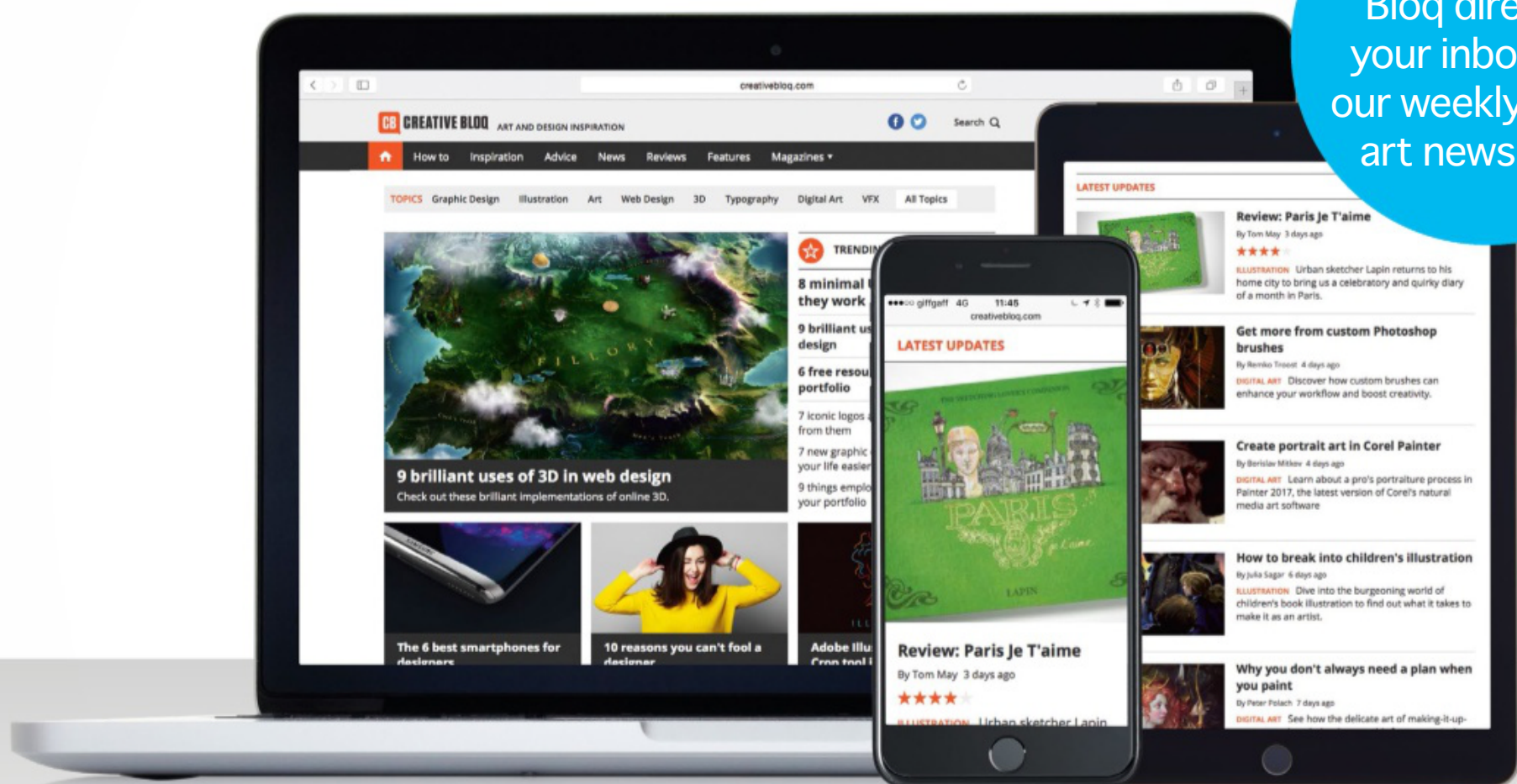
the University of Applied Sciences, Salzburg, where his aim is to teach without teaching, to say something without actually saying it, encouraging his students to see themselves as a reporter whose job it is to observe their own characters and analyse what they do and how they behave. He’s asking the same question Ken asked him: are you happy to make good art, or do you want try and make great art?

“I think good art shows that the artist was fully in control of it. However, great art goes one step further. It becomes more than the artist themselves. Great art inspires and surprises even its originator.”



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Advice from the world's best artists

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## This issue:

### 64 Paint colourful character art

See how Pernille Ørum takes the idea for a Wild West character and brings it to life using simple techniques and vibrant colours.

### 70 15 tips for better lighting keys

Film designer Drew Hartel draws on his professional experience working on top animated films to help you bring your lighting keys to life.

### 80 Create art for your portfolio

Visual development artist Mitch Leeuwe reveals how he starts a character line-up to help secure work in the animation industry.

### 86 Use vis-dev skills to paint a story

Simon Baek goes through the basics of visual development to create a fun sense of storytelling within a single painting.



## Photoshop PAINT COLOURFUL CHARACTER ART

See how **Pernille Ørum** takes the idea for a character and brings it to life using simple techniques and vibrant colours



### Artist PROFILE

**Pernille Ørum**  
LOCATION: Denmark

Pernille has been part of the animation industry for seven years as a character designer and has collaborated with many large studios. She designed Warner Bros.' DC Super Hero Girls. [www.pernilleoe.dk](http://www.pernilleoe.dk)

### GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 8 now!



As a visual developer in the animation industry it's your job to realise yours and other people's ideas, and to tell a story using your creative skills. This means that you need to convey your objective to your audience and understand the effect different elements in a composition have on the viewer. This being art, nothing's written in stone, but learning the

rules and then deciding how you want to use them is a great start.

I begin a painting by identifying the story. Who is the character or what's the mood I'm after? Here, I'll be painting a lady from the Wild West with an attitude and so I think about the colour palettes in the American West and how the warm tones of the prairie could carry this illustration.

In my workshop I'll be focusing mostly on colouring an image. So to

get the most out of this article it'll be helpful to have a strong understanding of how to construct an image using form, negative space, how to paint light and how colours relate to each other.

I'll take you through my ideas process and how I decide on the colours early on. Then I'll show you how I build up an image using flat local colours, before bringing it all together at the end.



### 1 Thumbnailing my ideas

When starting your drawing it's important to have a clear vision of what you want to show, and here thumbnailing is a great tool. It's a chance to quickly sketch out and test various idea without spending too much time on them. It also enables you to run your ideas past other people while it's still possible to make changes easily. Here I want to draw a Wild West-themed woman with attitude, and try out a range of poses.

### 2 Cleaning up and simplifying

I work very simply, so before I begin colouring I try to have as clear a line drawing as possible. I correct the character's anatomy and draw many of her clothing details. Now I'm ready to simplify my drawing. ➡

### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

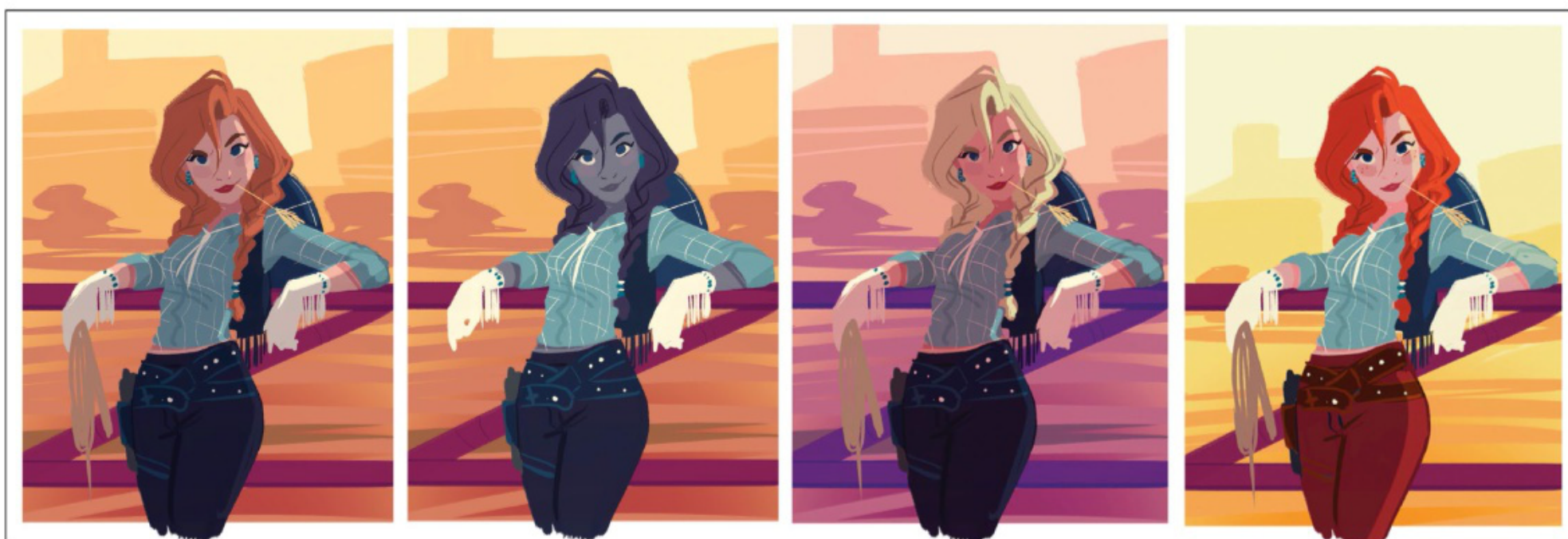
CUSTOM BRUSH:  
GOUACHE BRUSH

I took a gouache brush created by Kyle T Webster and removed the Opacity, so now it's basically a full colour brush with rough edges. I might play with the Transfer setting to create textures on a character's face.



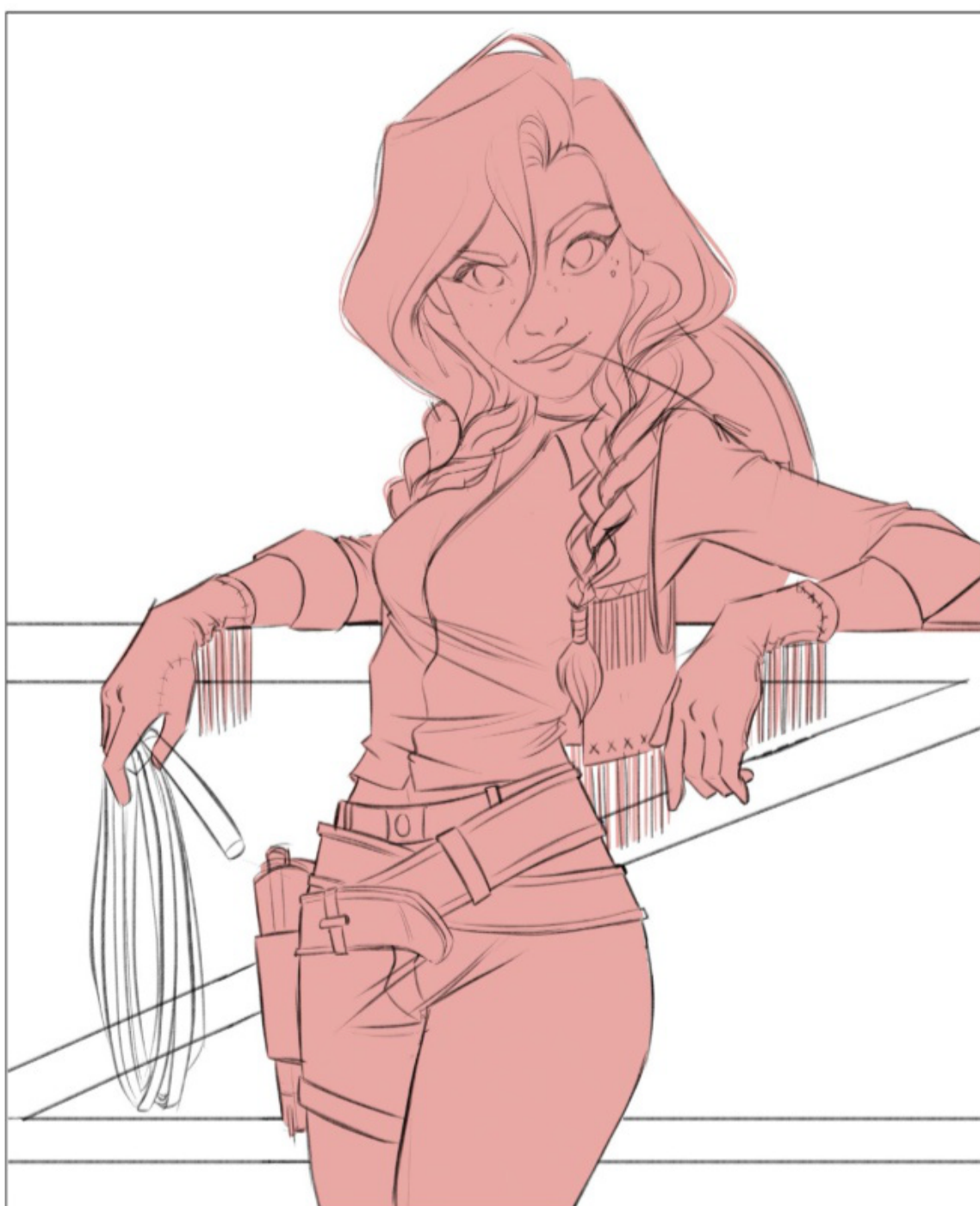






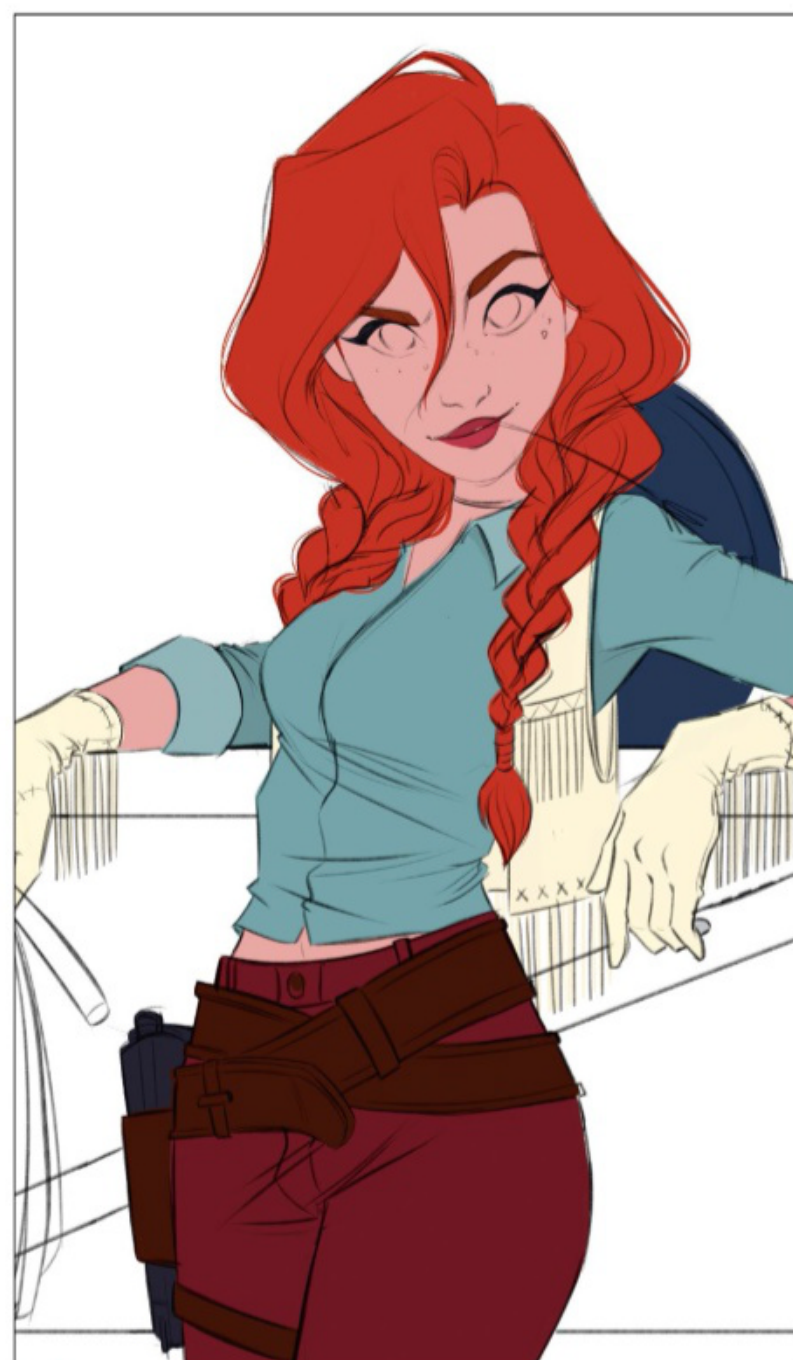
### 3 Produce a range of colour thumbnails

Once I'm happy with the line drawing I create small colour thumbnails to see what works best for the illustration. This is one of my favourite steps and I enjoy playing with different ideas and just being bold with my colours. It's important to bear in mind basic colour theory and the principles of the colour wheel. I normally don't spend more than a few minutes on each thumbnail.



### 4 Blocking out the character

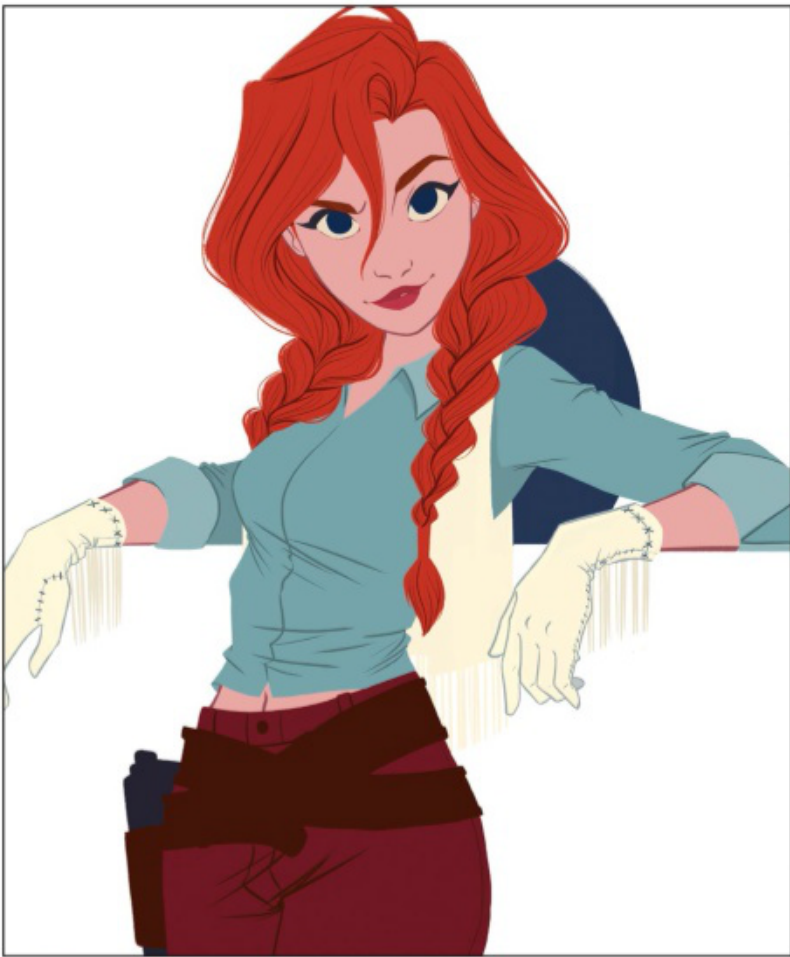
When I'm ready to start colouring I reduce the Opacity on the sketch layer. Then I start blocking out the character with a solid colour using the Brush and Eraser tools on a new layer underneath the sketch. It's important to have a clear silhouette and I find that I have more control when I draw it by hand.



### 5 Colour blocking

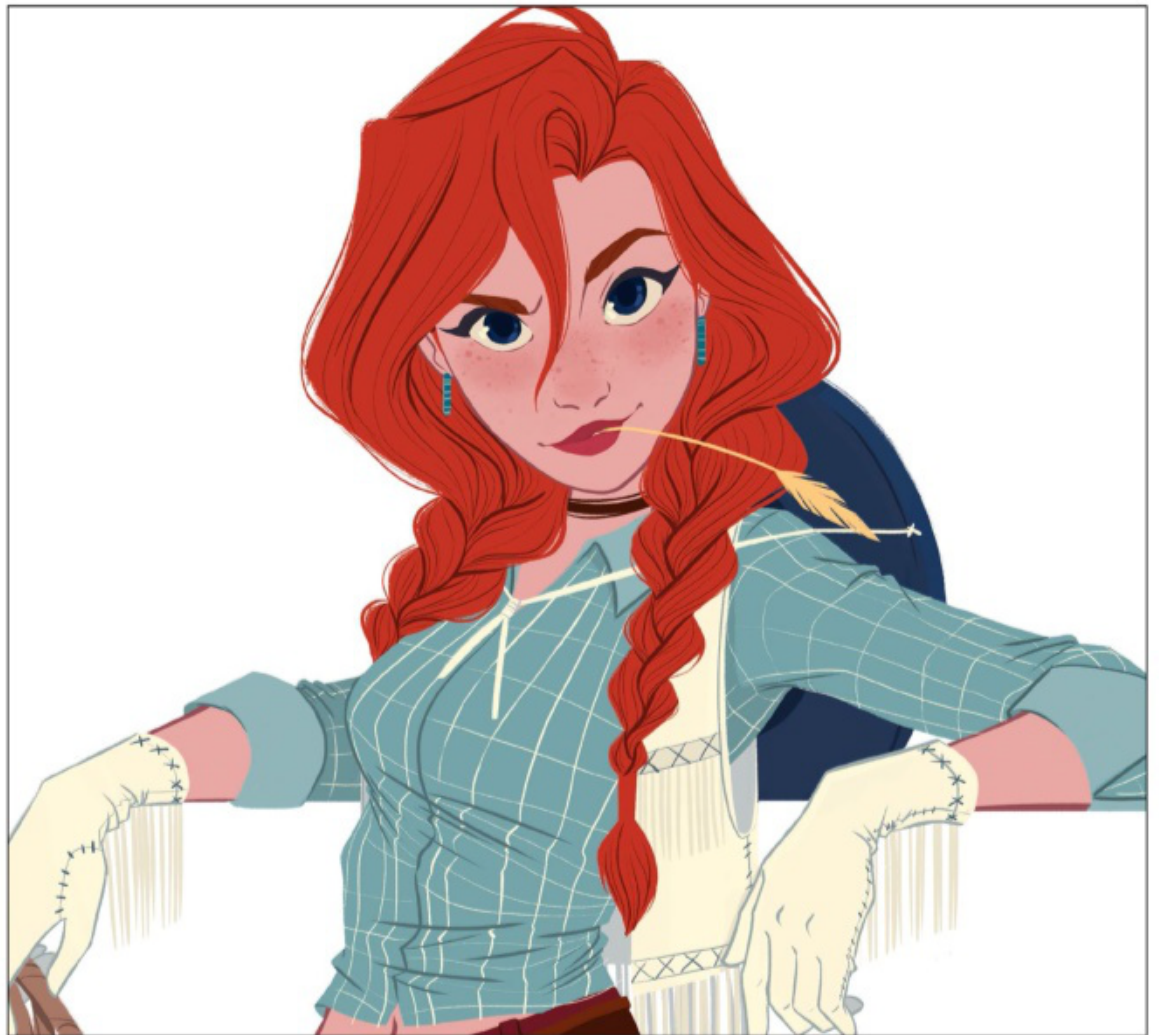
Next, I create a clipping mask within the blocked-out shape and on a new layer for each colour, proceed to block out the main shapes of the drawing. I usually start with the hair because it has the most details, and place it above all the other layers.





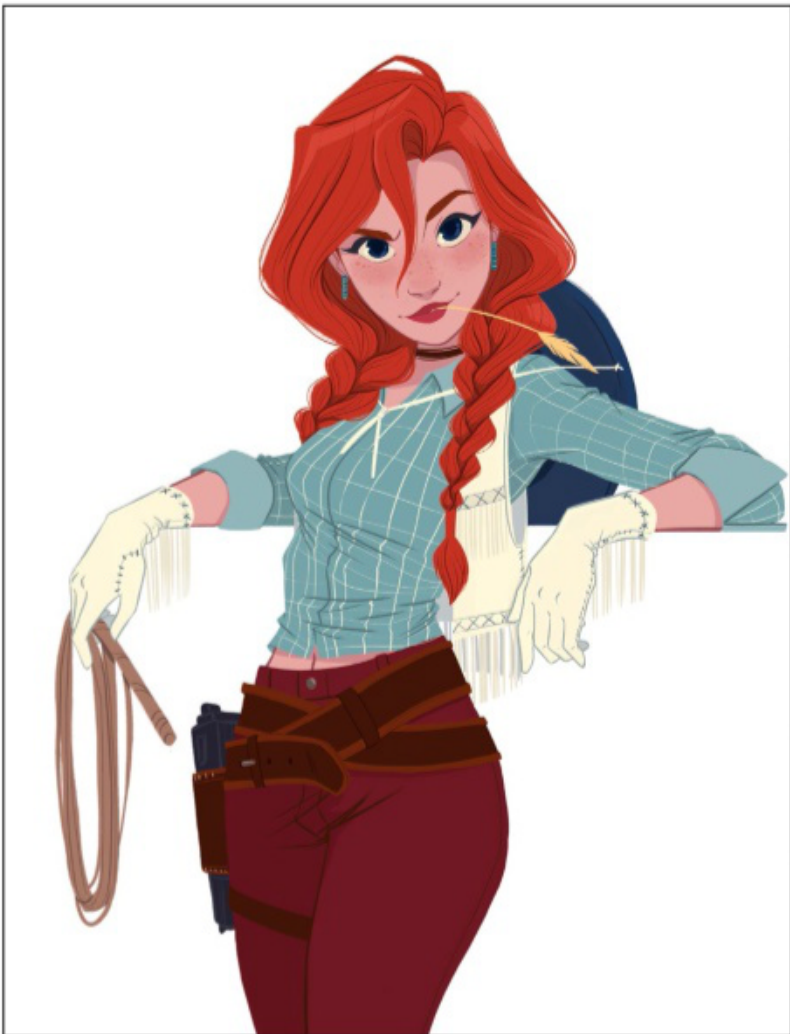
## 6 Add lines to increase volume

To make the flat shapes appear volumetric I use the information from my worked-up sketch and add lines where they support the shape. It can often be a bit tricky to know when and where to put in a line. Keeping them on separate layers makes it easy to amend your choices.



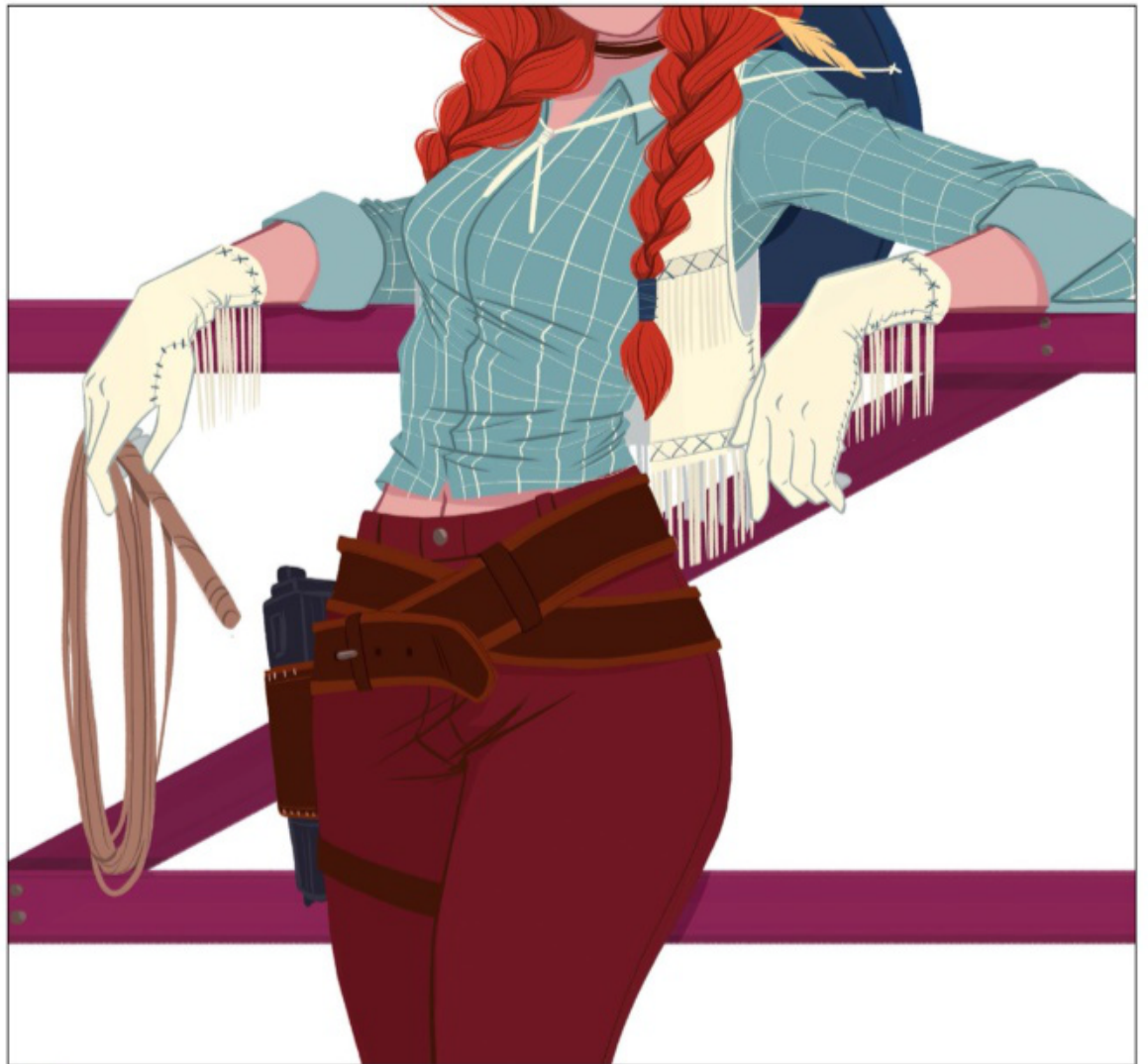
## 7 Details help to enhance a character's personality

Now you can start to introduce little touches that give the character more personality. Here I've added a ruddiness to the cheeks and nose, freckles, details to the eyes, a lasso and other clothing embellishments.



## 8 Bring in shadows

To create more volume and definition I add shadows that aren't based on directional light, but rather the volumetric form. They help to define the shape of the braids and separate the character's shirt from her body.



## 9 Painting the fence rail

The railing that my character's leaning against is the last key element in the scene, so I make sure that it's separated from her and appears three dimensional, by using the same techniques that I used for her body and clothing. ➡





## 10 Background blocking while maintaining variety

Before I start adding environmental light on the character, I colour in the background. I begin this stage by blocking out the shapes, making a conscious effort to avoid repeating myself with my choices of shapes.





## 11 Background details

Less is more when adding details to a background. It's important not to lead the viewer's eyes away from your character, so think about atmospheric perspective and work with monochromatic and analogous colours, while still being aware of which shapes you're trying to define.



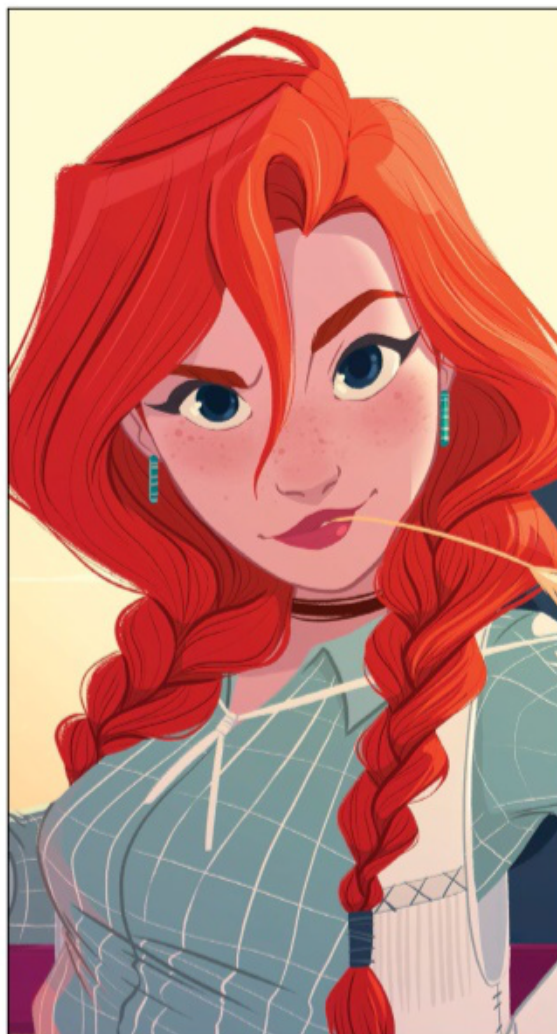
## 12 Enhance the atmosphere of the environment

I use the Gradient tool to select colours from the background and combine layers to boost the atmosphere in this part of the composition. This should be done carefully, because it's easy to overdo this step and make the image look flat.



## 13 Painting in soft light

To bring the character forward from the background I mask the top layer and use the Gradient tool to add a soft light. In this drawing I use the yellow from the sky to show light coming in at an angle and a warm orange from the opposite direction. Then I reduce the Opacity and change the layer mode to Overlay.



## 14 Hard light and reflections from the prairie

Finally, I paint in the hard light, which indicates the direction of the sunlight in this image and helps to make the artwork pop. I always apply some reflection on the shadow side. Here I've chosen a bright orange, which adds to the prairie atmosphere. And that's the painting done! 🍷



## Artist insight

# 15 TIPS FOR BETTER LIGHTING KEYS

### Artist PROFILE

**Drew Hartel**

LOCATION: US

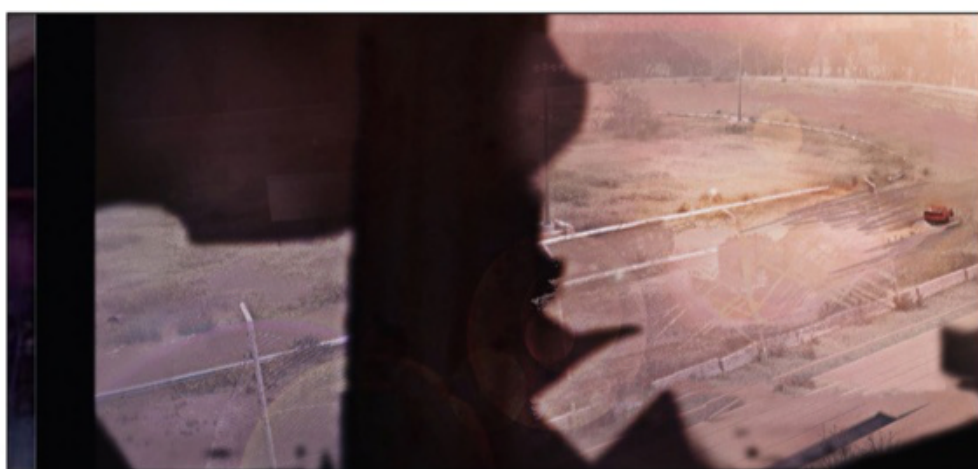
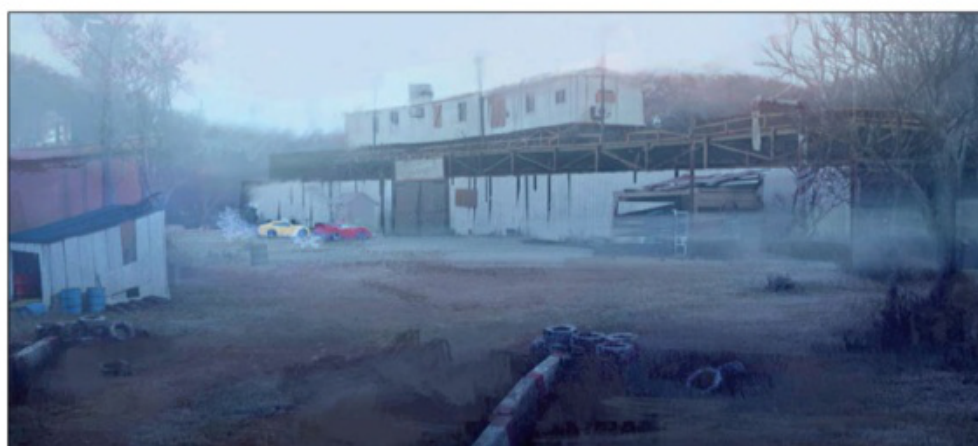
Drew is a film designer who's worked on animated blockbusters such as Pixar's *Coco* and Sony's recent Academy Award winner, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*. He's currently creating artwork for Laika for its next untitled film project.

[www.drewhartel.com](http://www.drewhartel.com)

Film designer **Drew Hartel** draws on his professional experience to help you bring your lighting keys to life



Storyboards tell the narrative story, while lighting keys express the emotional story. A good lighting key comes straight from the heart and requires empathy and poetic thinking. You'll also need a solid understanding of the foundations of light so that you can wield this tool powerfully. Here are 15 ways that I've discovered, which help me get my heart on to the screen. I hope they help you, too.



© Pixar Animation Studios

### 1 BUILD UP TO BIG MOMENTS

Lighting keys are done in succession. Like music, you have to know where you're going so that you can control the "dynamics" along the way. If you know you have a brightly lit burst of colour in your sequence, save it for the high point. Novice artists may want to start with a big moment, but there's a delicate beauty in the build-up to a climactic moment.

In this scene, Lightning McQueen is following in the footsteps of his former

mentor, Doc Hudson, who taught him his iconic move "turn right to go left". When I first looked at the storyboards I knew this scene would be an iconic and sentimental moment that needed to be illuminated and brought forward from the rest of the sequence. My challenge was figuring out how to do so.

At the time, artist Bill Cone was teaching me about lighting keys. I studied his work from the first *Cars* film, and one of his images, in particular, stood out to me. It was an iconic

painting of the scene where Doc Hudson is out in the desert kicking up all this dust. Pixar had that image blown up big in the cafeteria. I would stare at it most lunches, enamoured by the way Bill illuminated the atmosphere so beautifully. I took inspiration from that painting and used it as an opportunity to pay homage to Bill, the same way Lightning McQueen was paying homage to Doc. I like to believe it adds a subconscious layer to this key that you can feel.



All Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse artwork © Sony Pictures Animation



## 2 LEARN TO EMPATHISE WITH YOUR CHARACTER

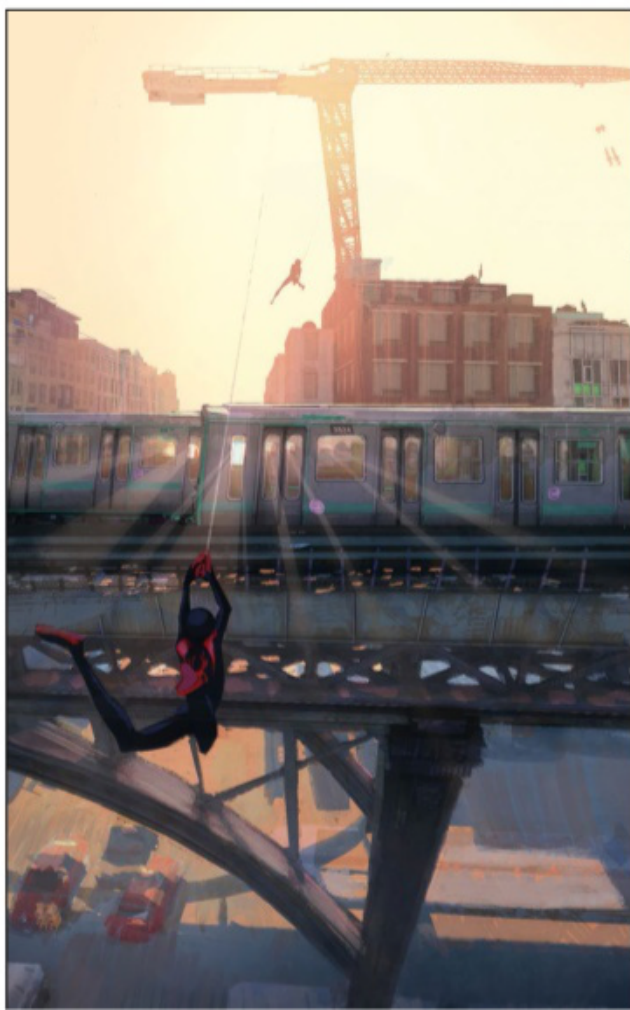
You can't fake empathy. It's stepping into the shoes of a stranger and building a bridge from your experiences to theirs. It requires humility, letting go of your personal biases, and the ability to think about someone else instead of yourself. This may sound uncomfortable, but sometimes being uncomfortable is key to creating work that will move people emotionally.

In this example, Miles Morales has learnt something that

completely changes his world view. In the moment, he's feeling several emotions at once. As the artist we have to put ourselves in his place and think of a time we've experienced many emotions at once. During those times we tend to feel lost and, in search of stability, we cling to whatever we can.

So now let's get practical. Essentially, to feel lost is to be in a "haze". Here, even though Miles is only a short distance from Peter, he's got some strong atmosphere pushing him back into his haze.

He desperately wants to find stability somewhere, so I made sure to convey that through his gestures: his eyes are watering, his head is coming forward, his eyes are filled with a strong highlight, representing his last glimmer of hope that Peter might be able to help. Miles is grasping onto his arm, which is a clear graphic shape as well. I also made sure to give Peter a lot of form on his shoulders so we could see that he's also bearing that burden on his shoulders with Miles as he's listening.



“Empathy requires humility, letting go of your personal biases, and the ability to think about someone else instead of yourself”

## 3 GIVE EACH PAINTING A TITLE

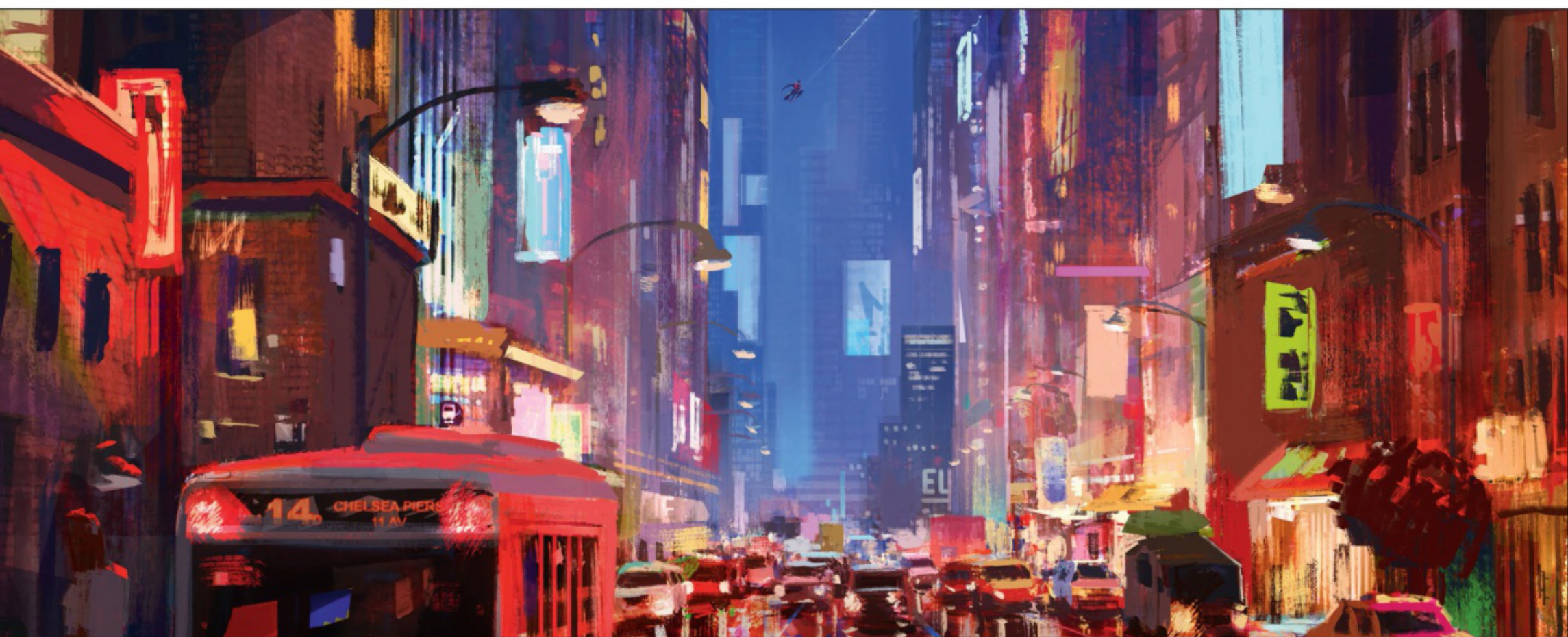
Something you can do to keep your mind focused on the simplicity of the moment is to give it a simple title. This tip seems so unassuming that you might think it's insignificant, but it's useful when you're painting multiple images in a sequence.

This example consists of several lighting keys that I compiled into one image so that it would flow really well. The title is A New Day. That title informed every lighting decision that I made. Down below we see the early morning traffic being bathed in the first light

of the day. I put Miles in shadow in the first key, heading toward the new light. The subway windows were a great opportunity to get light spilling through with God rays, the type of light you would experience in a cathedral with stained glass windows. Often when I think of God, church and rays of light, I think of a new beginning.

The second Miles is now fully in the light. He's become a silhouette, much like the buildings around him. The last image of Miles is on this iconic crane and he's nearly invisible as he's become one with the new day. ➡➡





## 4 DON'T PAINT THINGS, PAINT LIGHT

It's easy to get caught up in the details, but most of the time that's not necessary for the lighting department. Your responsibility is to create a general direction for how the light looks and feels. When you understand the fundamentals of light you can do this with relatively loose mark making. However, every studio is different, and some will want you to be more specific than this example here, and that's okay. If you understand how light works it

won't be a problem for you, it's simply more time-consuming. However, even in that situation you shouldn't focus on the thing you're painting. Instead, focus on where the light is coming from, how it's travelling there and how it's received by the object.

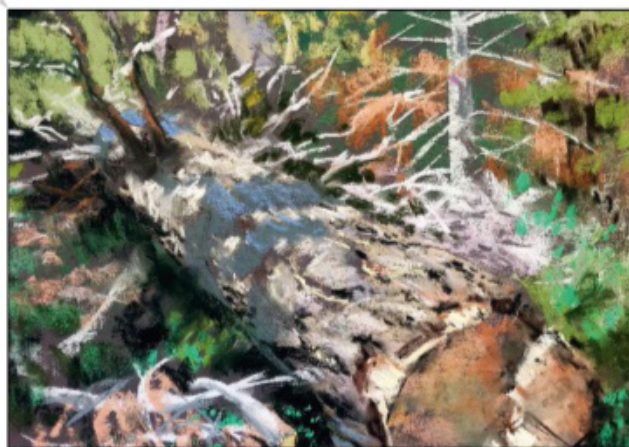
When you focus on painting the light you'll produce a realistic direction for the key. Here you can see I loosely lathered on colour and light over the buildings, losing much of the details (most don't even have windows). This tells the technical director that these objects are

less important than the cars in the foreground with their reflections on the wet pavement and Miles' silhouette in the background.

It was a real privilege to work with the team at Sony Pictures Imageworks because they could read this painting and know exactly what to do. That comes with their level of experience and their understanding of how light works. You'll need to form your own relationship with the people working at your studio and see what works best for everybody to understand each other and work efficiently.

## 5 LEARN FROM NATURE

A question that comes up a lot is, "How can I get better at lighting and colour". There's only one answer for this and unfortunately there are no shortcuts. Our limitless source for learning is being outside and studying the nature of light. For example, when I say the word "sunset" you'll probably have your own general idea of what that could be. I could challenge you and ask for three vastly different sunsets and you could likely do it. The question is, could you do 10? Twenty? A hundred? A thousand? The exciting answer is that it's definitely possible, and I would claim that there are infinite possibilities to the varieties of how a sunset looks. I would also claim that a sunset can be any colour on the wheel, any value and any saturation. This is why nature is our best teacher because it will



never be mundane or boring and it will always surprise you.

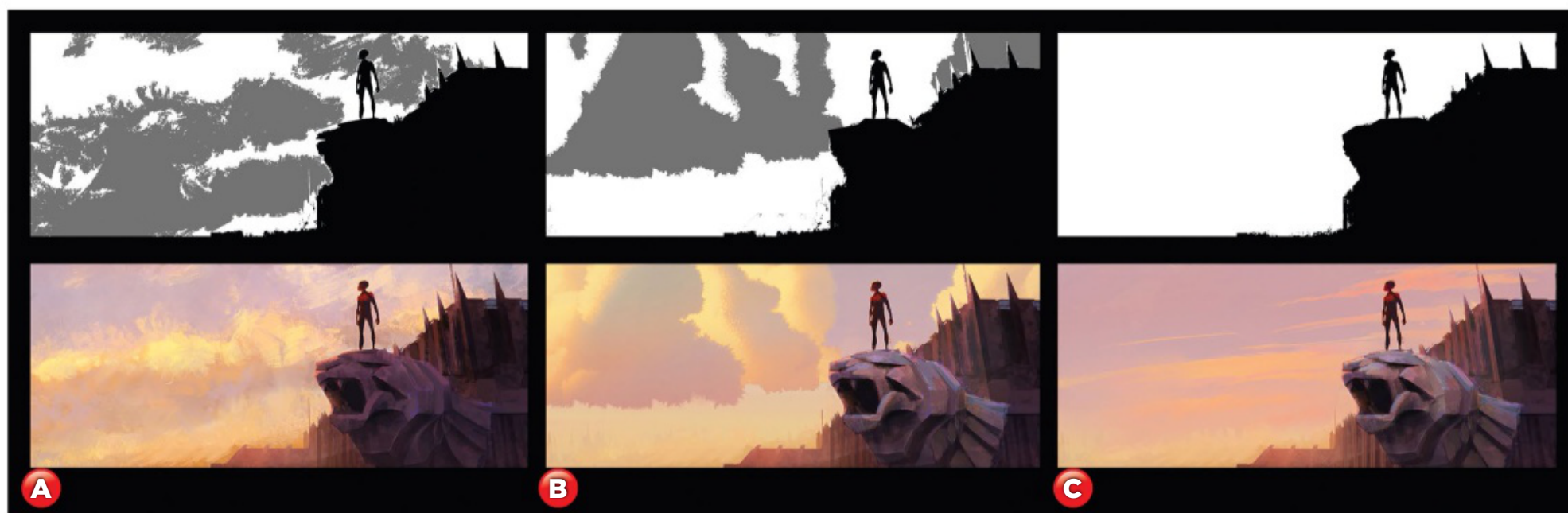
When I started working at Disney, my production designer and former teacher there was Bill Perkins. I also asked Bill how to improve my understanding of light and colour. He told me to go to a spot down the

“ Our eyes will always try to convince us that they know what they're seeing ”

street from the studio that had a big white building surrounded by trees and paint it at the same spot every day and paint notes on how each day is different. If it's not different, it's not a problem with nature, it's a problem with my perception.

This is our problem with light. Our eyes will try to convince us that they know what they're seeing, but we have to override that notion and be humble enough to look as if it's our first time. When you learn to do this you'll see colours that you never knew were there.

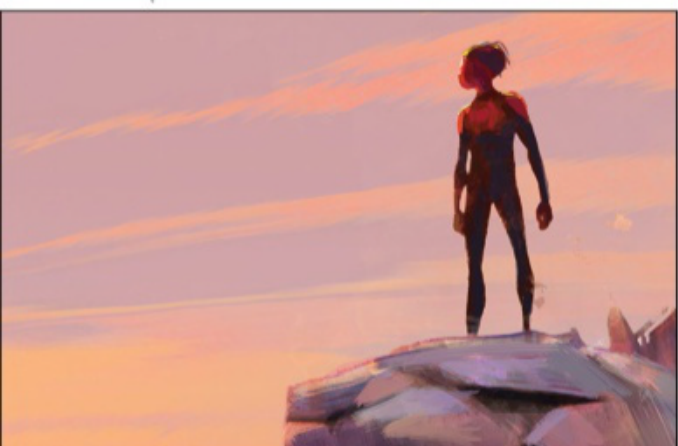




## 6 MAKE A SIMPLE VISUAL STATEMENT

The more simple your image is, the more powerful it will become on screen. This concept can become complex very quickly: take this example from Spider-Man. This is an iconic moment and Miles has not only made peace within himself, he's restored peace to his neighbourhood.

So for my first attempt I got caught up in the texture of the sky (there aren't very many skies in Spider-Man so we were writing the visual language as this piece was being developed). I achieved a lot of grit and emotion, but it wasn't right for the moment. The first one says there's a lot going on in Miles' mind when really this is a time for Miles to exhale and be at peace. In my second attempt, I focused too much on the graphic stylisation of these clouds: they framed Miles nicely, but it felt like they were closing in on him. In the third one the clouds were pushed way back into the background, becoming one clear shape. They're repetitive so they read as a pattern and overall are soft yet still with a subtle, active shape – in line with the style of the film. The images now feels like a triumphant and calming place for Miles to claim peace.



## 7 DON'T THINK HARDER, FEEL HARDER INSTEAD

If you want your audience to feel where you're coming from then you have to dig deeper and push yourself to get more emotionally connected to the content. In this example, Miles is about to make his big decision to become Spider-Man. So I combined two keys to match the camera pan. I had all these lights going on and lit his face really intricately, yet I was unsatisfied. I couldn't figure it out and it was driving me crazy at the time. I had done everything technically right. I understood the moment and it looked pretty cool, but it didn't have any feeling.

I then came up with this scenario: "Miles is a bit of an outcast; he has one foot in two different cultures, and he doesn't feel like he fits in any of them. He's found his calling, but doesn't know if he can live up to being Spider-Man. He's in the city that he wants to protect, but yet doesn't feel a part of it." That was my big "a-ha" moment. I kept the city vibrant and put Miles' face in the shadows. I used his tough exterior as metaphorical armour to protect himself from getting hurt. This is a sentiment I can relate to and I'm sure other people can, too. So, the solution was to not do more, but do less to get the right emotion across. ➡➡



## 8 DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN SIGHT AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Light is our only means to see and understand the world around us. We see in our minds not in our eyes, and we've learned through school that the path to realism is detail. The pinnacle of this concept is the camera, which picks up every little detail and treats them all as of equal importance. This concept is not a natural one: it's how a machine translates light, not necessarily how people translate light.

Our vision is much closer to an impressionistic painting because we choose what we should focus on and we generalise and assume the rest. Imagine if I asked you to go to the park, pick out someone sitting on the bench and look at



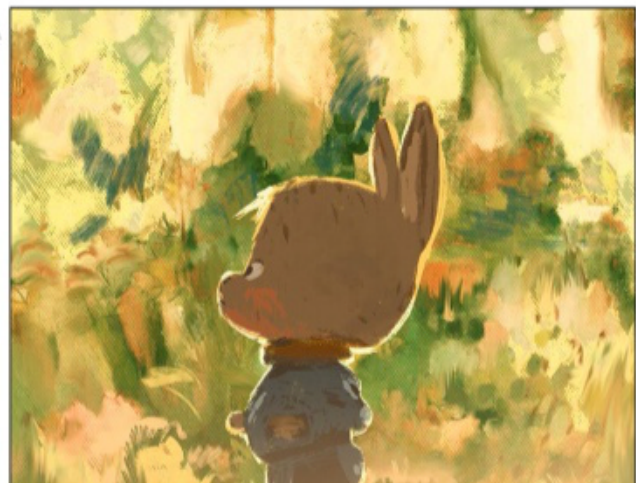
them for five seconds, then close your eyes and describe what you saw. Most of us would describe features about the person we found interesting, but we'd have trouble relating the exact style of the bench, the type of grass or what was in the background, although we would likely have a general sense of the surroundings. This is how you should paint, if you want to share your experiences and heart through your work.

So you may ask, doesn't film and CG animation use a camera? Yes, but the chief role of the cinematographer or designer is to negotiate with the camera to get the audience to focus on the right details. They may use set dressing, blur, and other varieties of VFX to achieve this. When you understand this principle, it will help you to be clear with your visuals and the audience will be less likely to be distracted.

## 9 ART FIRST, LOGIC SECOND

For me to get my heart across in an image I have to get it feeling right on an artistic level, before I go in and delineate what the specifics are. This is similar to how many painters approach their work: they'll go in with loose gestural marks and get it feeling right before they tackle the specifics.

I'm sure there's many reasons for why this tip works for people. My reasoning is it gets me engaged, thinking creatively and excited about what I'm creating. The details can always be decided later. For my personal project, Little, I'll start with abstract mark making before I figure out what the composition is going to be. I also did this with Spider-Man - often starting in pastel then taking that image and combining it with the storyboard to get something that has heart and also fits the bill for what the directors needed from me.



## 10 DON'T TELL PEOPLE WHAT IT IS, LET THEM TELL YOU

This is a great one for students. If you have a concept or lighting key you've been developing there can be an underlying fear of sharing it with people. Not because you didn't craft it well, but because they might laugh at it or misunderstand it. This is something you need to face head-on: start showing your work without having to explain it.

Family and friends will generally be nice to you: if you give them an explanation before

they see the image, they'll compromise between what you said and what the image actually looks like and agree with you. It's better that you show the image with no explanation and let them tell you what it is. This will give you valuable insights that you can use to investigate what about your image is giving that impression and how you can fix it. Not everybody within your social circle is going to be able to give you the answer - that's your job, after all - but everybody's opinion on looking at images is valid.

“For me to get my heart across in an image I have to get it feeling right on an artistic level before I delineate what the specifics are”



## 11 DON'T CHOOSE LIGHT THAT YOU'VE SEEN BEFORE, CHOOSE LIGHT YOU'VE FELT BEFORE

You can see a trend here, right? I often gravitate more towards emotions and feeling when talking about lighting because it's the responsibility of a lighting key. Here we have one of the last shots in Spider-Man and Miles is airborne looking down at the city. Obviously, I've never experienced this before in my own life. I've seen similar things for brief moments on a plane or through daring photographers prints, but if I were to create a key solely on those experiences it wouldn't have much of my emotion put into it.

This piece was titled On Top of the World. That's an emotion I've been lucky enough to feel a few times in my life. Sometimes I've felt on top of the world because I've just fallen in love, achieved a difficult goal or been hit with inspiration. The feeling is dizzying and exciting and it seems like the world around is sparkling with excitement and opportunity. These are all things I can take and translate them visually, as I've done here, to get the feeling across – not just the time of day.



## 12 YOU CAN'T CHEAT HOW LIGHTS WORK

Sometimes when we look at work by great painters of light we get the sense that anything is possible, and for the most part that notion is true. However, your mind must be rooted in the fundamentals of how light works and it can be a complex area of study. People will often make up lights and colours that have no origin point and contradict other statements made about light.

Compare this to music: you can play any note you want on the scale, but if you play two notes that just don't go together it sounds bad. Yet there are some masters of music who play right

on the edge and put the wildest combinations together and somehow it all magically works. That's a mark of someone who has spent time to master their craft and it doesn't come easily.

Think of your lighting key like a real-life movie set. You have to place lights somewhere and they're going to affect other things. Here you can use methods to intensify or dull the reaction of light on an object, but it won't change how it works. In this example I need to amplify Miles launching over a car crash. I could just make him bright and that fixes that problem. However, where is that light coming from? Wouldn't it cast a shadow? Why

is the light only hitting him? Why is everything else desaturated and he's saturated? Lighting can become a puzzle very quickly!

So in this moment, I found the opportunity to hit him with a strong spot light from the taxi-cab. Now I'm sure if you were going to go in there with a ruler, you could explain that the angle of light on a car wouldn't tilt in that direction, but that's where we're allowed to cheat a little bit. It's still a real light, it's logical where it's placed and how it's working – I just went in there and adjusted it a bit to suit my needs. Again, you can cheat where lights are placed, but you can't cheat how lights work. ➡





## 13 START WITH AN OVERCAST DAY

I learned this from a class I took with Robert Kondo and Dice Tsutsumi. Often a computer will render in phases. One of the first phases will show the render of the shot in neutral light. Why neutral light? Because it accurately shows the local colour and general value of every object. Where can we see neutral light in nature? That's simple – we see it in any overcast

day where the light from the sun is diffused through the clouds and spread almost evenly to everything around us. There's typically no cast shadows or intense light interactions so it simplifies things significantly.

From here you can paint over it with your digital tools, adjustment layers or just translate it traditionally to suit your light condition. It'll ensure continuity that everything in your shot is

being hit with the same light and changing colour, temperature and value appropriately.

In this piece for Cars 3, the overcast day was handed to the shading department because it needed to make sure all the local colours matched what they were painting on to the models. The one painted at near dusk was for the lighting department to know how to alter all those neutral colours to fit the moment.





© Pixar Animation Studios

“Neutral light accurately shows the local colour and general value of every object”



## 14 CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT PALETTE? START WITH THE RIGHT SONG!

This happens to me on a daily basis. I can't find the right palette to match the mood that I'm looking for, I may not have time or luck to capture the perfect moment in nature, haven't found the right reference or can't get my head on straight about what's going on. A good solution is find a song that you think "sounds" like this moment. Again, this sounds "artsy" but we're artists! Let's be artsy and get in the right mood to create our masterpieces.

This is an example where I was struggling to find the right palette for Spider-Man. I knew it was dusk, but there's so many solutions to this time of day, so how do I choose one? Eventually, I found the right song that matched the moment for me and that helped me to gain the nuances of the right palette.



## 15 IF YOU CAN WRITE IT, YOU CAN LIGHT IT

Another tip is to write out terms that describe the moment. This is especially useful for mundane moments. So here's my seemingly mundane moment example. You have Miles' back to camera and he's opened a door to the rooftop. The way it's framed means we don't get much space on the picture plane to see what outside looks like. So I wrote out words and expressions such as "stepping out into the fray", "electric blue city", "the final door", "determined", "ready", "facing your fears" and so on. All of these helped direct me as to what was going on here and how this could actually be a really meaningful key.

Some people may say that some keys are just fillers or they're all serving your climax. I strongly disagree with this. Every lighting key should have something to say. Whether that voice is quiet, loud, piercing or silent, there's still value and it should be approached with respect and care. ●



Next month

Step into  
the dreamlike  
worlds created by  
Swedish illustrator  
Chantal Horeis





Next month

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**ISSUE 176 ON SALE IN THE UK** *Friday 14 June!*





## Photoshop & Blender 3D CREATE ART FOR YOUR PORTFOLIO



Visual development artist **Mitch Leeuwe** reveals how he starts a character line-up to help secure work in the animation industry

### Artist PROFILE

**Mitch Leeuwe**

**LOCATION:**  
The Netherlands

Mitch is a freelance vis-dev artist who works on animation, toys, comics and commercials. He also teaches online and in schools.  
[www.mitchleeuwe.nl](http://www.mitchleeuwe.nl)



If you're keen to secure work in the animation industry then creating personal projects are the way to go. I was advised to start developing my own characters and environments, just as if I were working for a studio. Industry figures want to browse your portfolio and check that your work matches their style, to ensure that you'd be a good fit with their teams.

It's certainly worth taking the time and effort to generate your own intellectual property and imagining that it's for film or TV audiences.

In this workshop I'll be creating a character line-up that could be used for an animation project. I want to develop a hero, some sidekicks, comic relief, enemies and the main antagonist. And once I've created this cast of characters, I can use them to design comic covers, film posters or

original environments showing the characters in action.

Next year, when I'm showing my portfolio to potential employers, I want to be able to demonstrate two different personal projects, featuring pages of original characters, props and environments. This means I won't be short of material to talk about in any interview situation. I want to show any studio that I'm a good match for its vis-dev team.





## 1 Get the creative juices flowing

When I work on a personal project I often start by drawing some random ideas in my sketchbook. In this case, I want to do something on a sci-fi theme – it's a topic that I've always loved. So I start drawing in my sketchbook and just have some fun with a pencil for a few minutes. After doodling some random robots and aliens, some workable ideas and themes start to form.

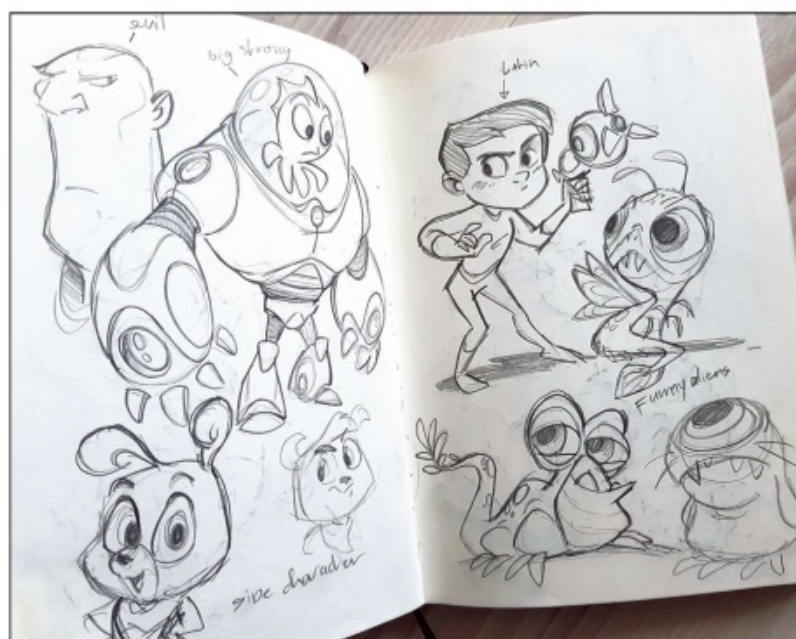


## 2 Choose a direction for your characters

Looking over the random sci-fi doodles that I've drawn in my sketchbook, I start to narrow down some of my ideas and think about how they'll look when combined in a group. I decide to make a character line-up of some of the characters. I'm looking for contrast and so the idea of a hero, a friendly robot, some evil aliens and two vehicles seems to be a good balance to me. ➡➡

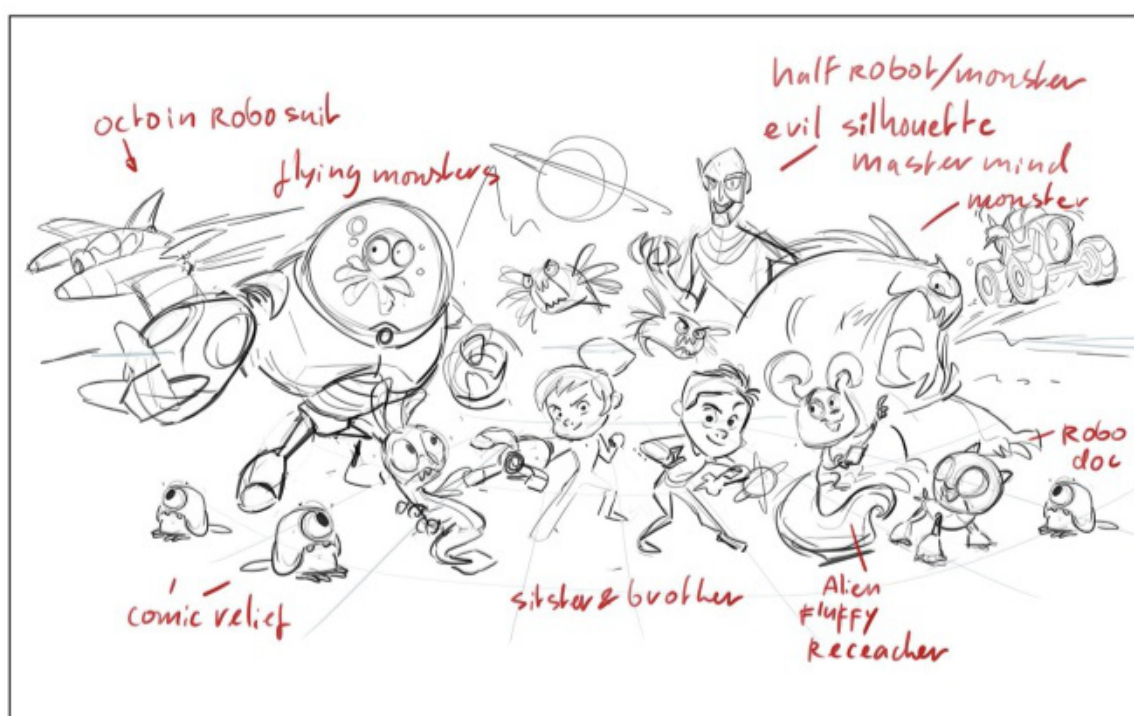


# Workshops



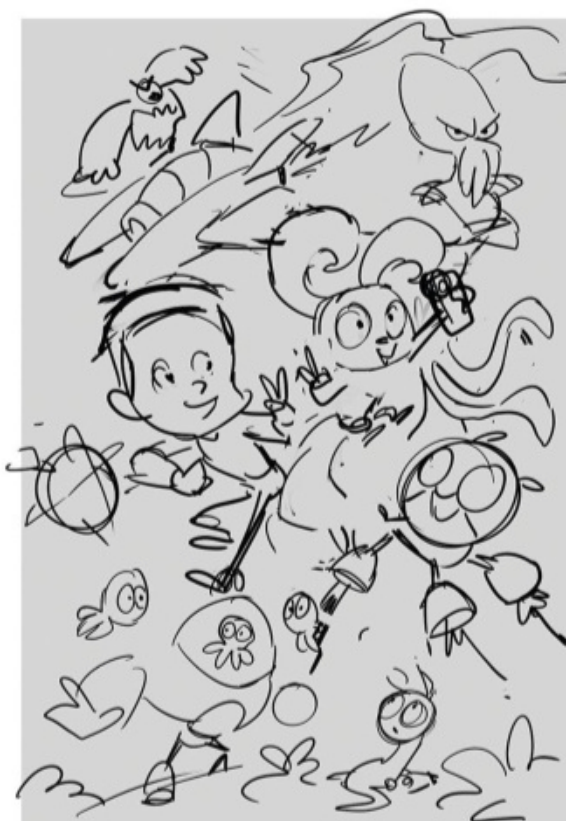
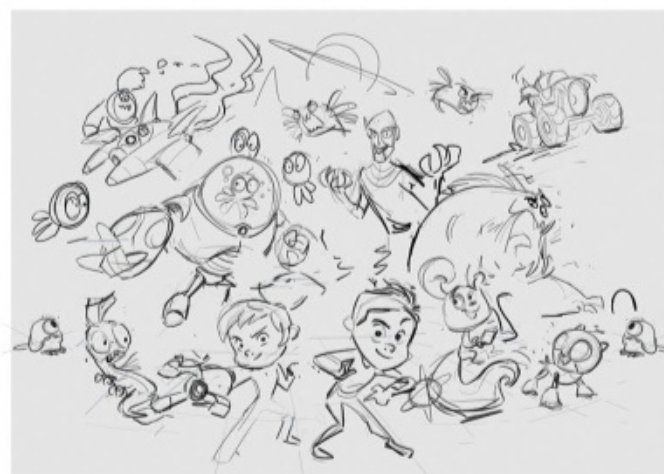
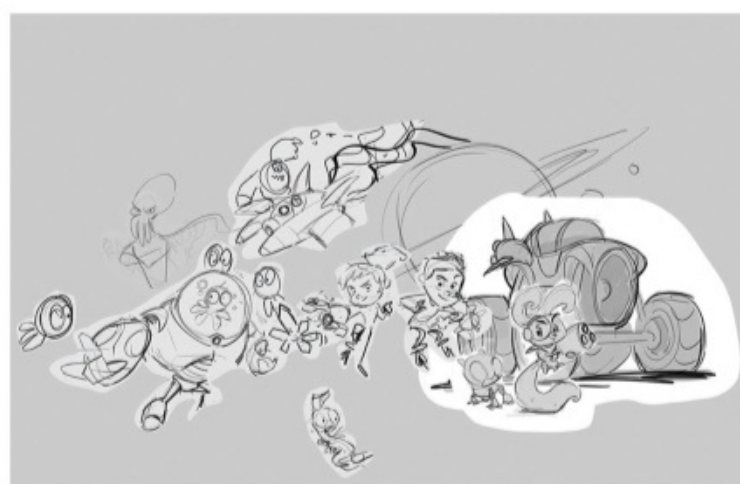
## 3 Keep working on your ideas

Sometimes I'm really busy and it's tricky finding some spare time to work up any ideas for personal projects. A sketchbook is great because you can take it with you pretty much anywhere. I draw these sketches on the train while travelling to see a client, generating some new characters to create the contrast I'm looking for.



## 4 Designing a rough layout of the figures

I take all my rough character ideas and turn them into a line-up. During this stage I've got a lot of ideas buzzing around – almost too many – and it's hard to make a decision and go in one direction. Take your time at this stage and make sure you're happy with your choices. It'll be harder to make changes later in the process.



## 5 Trying out different line-up layouts

Because this workshop will be published in a magazine I consider setting the line-up in a portrait format. Indeed, I explore different layouts while working on the design of individual characters. I like both vertical and horizontal formats, and choose to keep my options open.





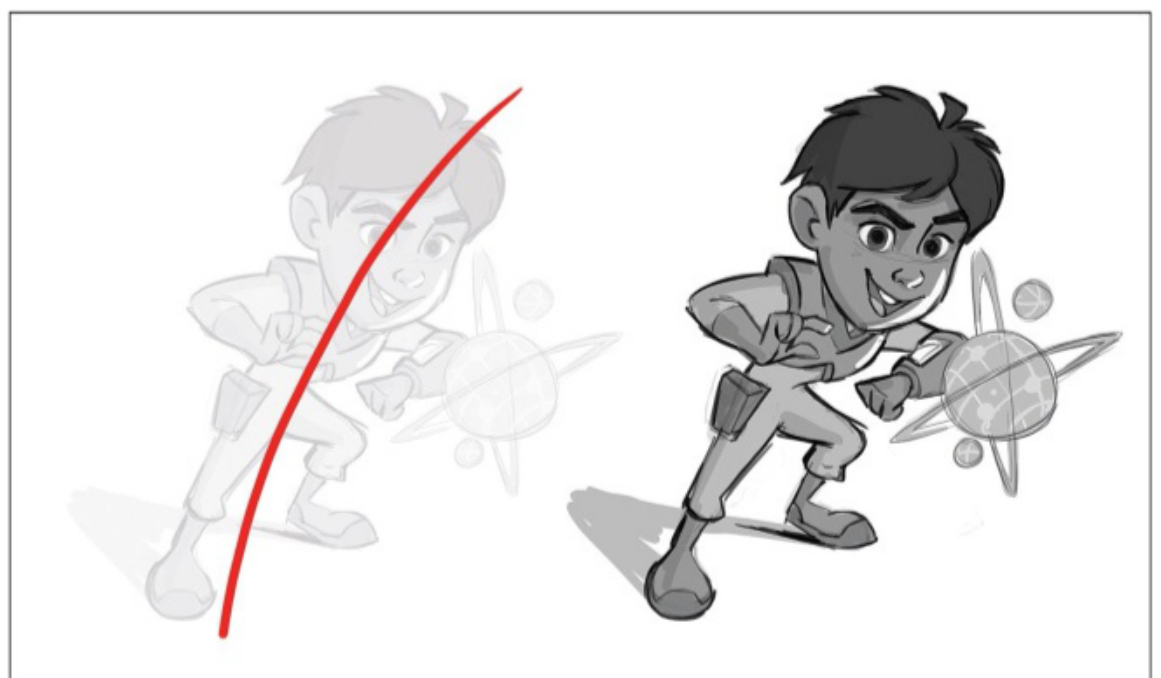
## 6 Exploring a vertical composition

I look at a previous issue of ImagineFX and consider how my workshop and artwork might appear in print, and make a rough version of a possible layout. I decide that a vertical drawing would work, but only with fewer characters – or else the line-up would become confusing.



## 7 Horizontal composition

I always intended to draw a group of different characters, because I had this line-up in mind for a possible cartoon series. That's why I decide on a horizontal line-up, because it's easier to read all the different characters. I still want to illustrate a vertical line-up, but I'll do that after I've finished this one.



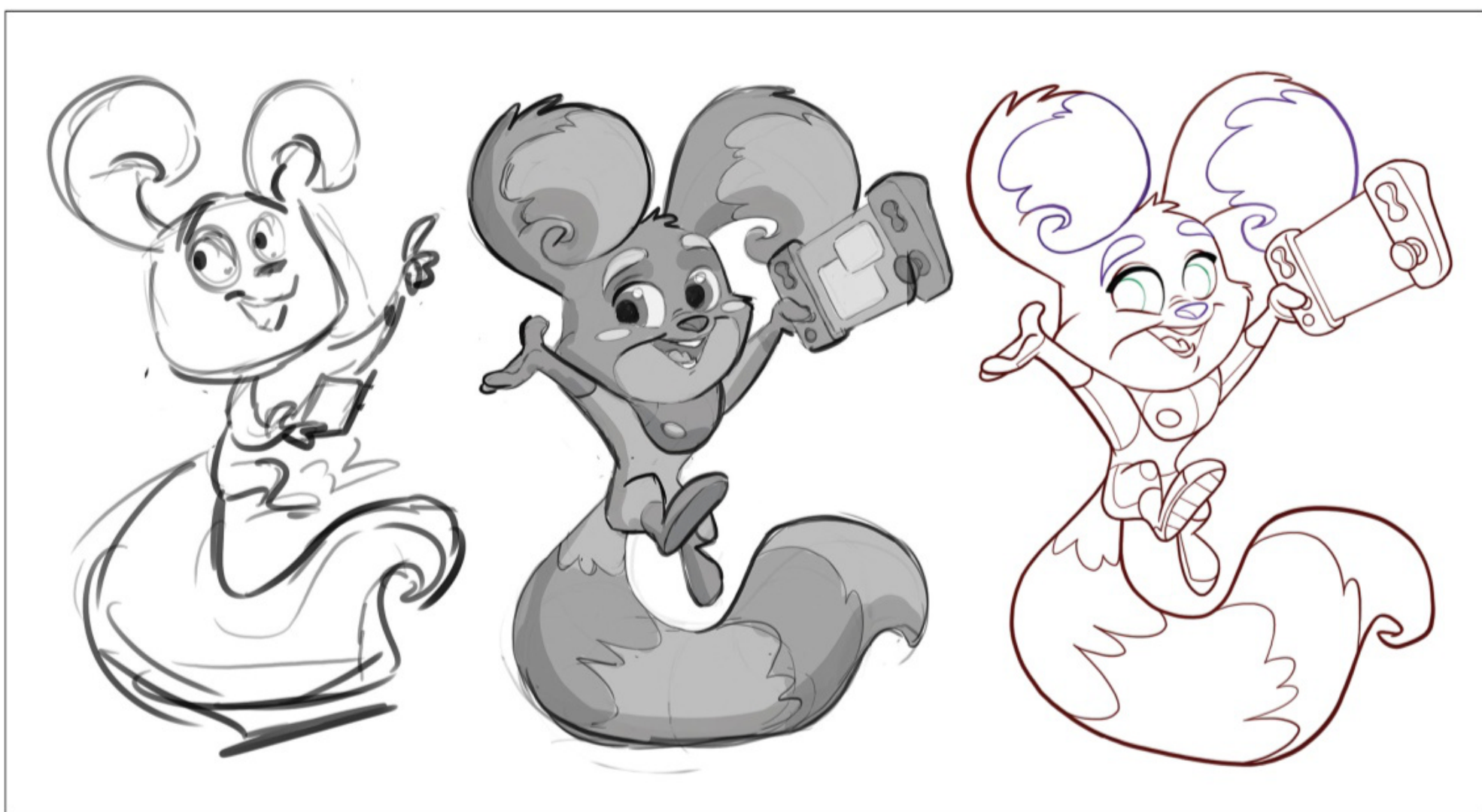
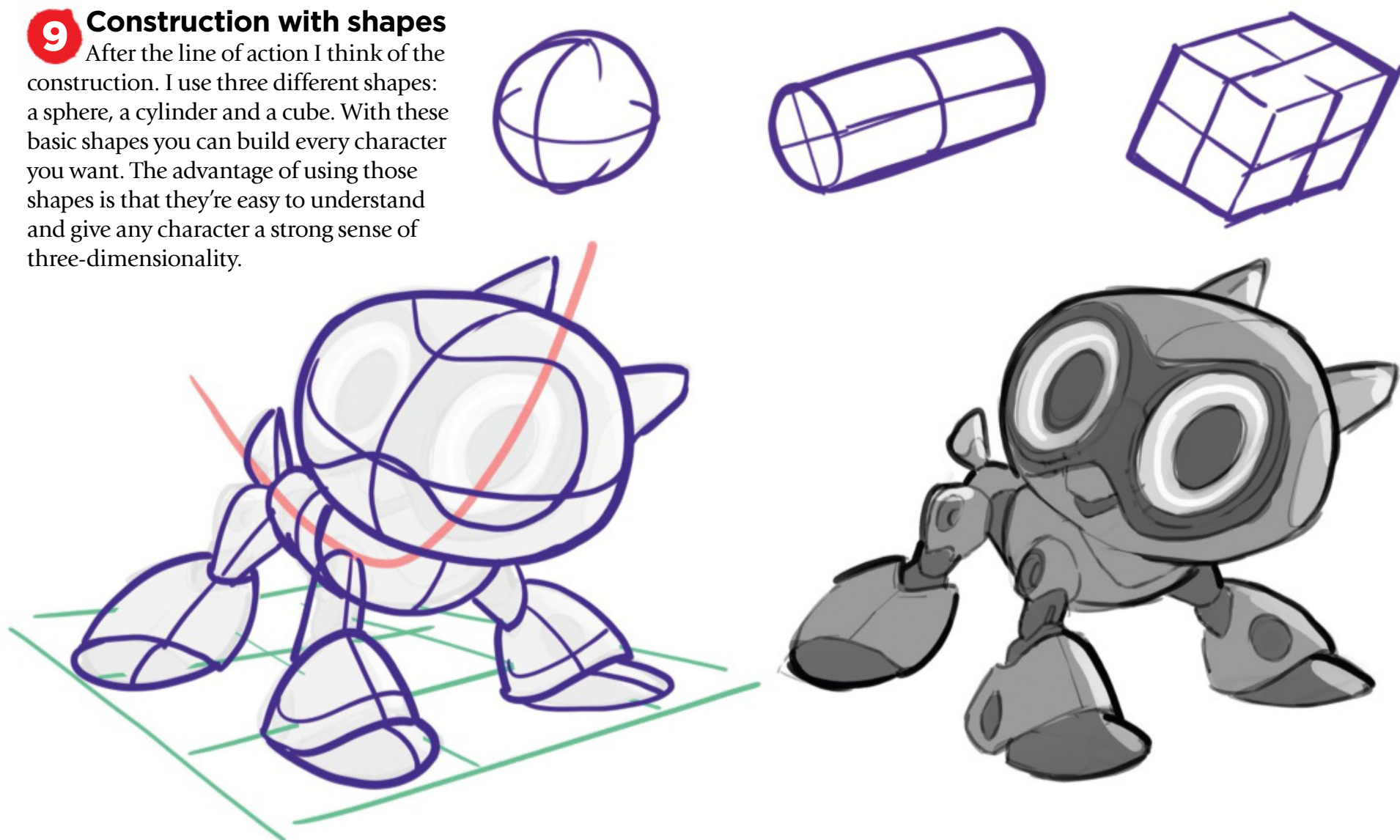
## 8 Developing the line of action

When I've finalised the composition sketch I start working on individual characters. I always start with a line of action, and ask myself what story do I want to tell with this character and how can I best tell that story in one line. Using these action lines also helps to keep everything readable and dynamic. ➡



## 9 Construction with shapes

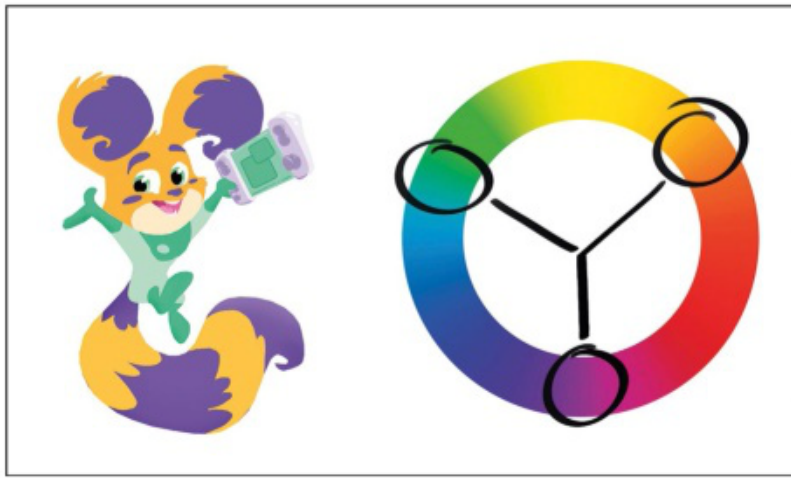
After the line of action I think of the construction. I use three different shapes: a sphere, a cylinder and a cube. With these basic shapes you can build every character you want. The advantage of using those shapes is that they're easy to understand and give any character a strong sense of three-dimensionality.



## 10 Refining the line-work of each character

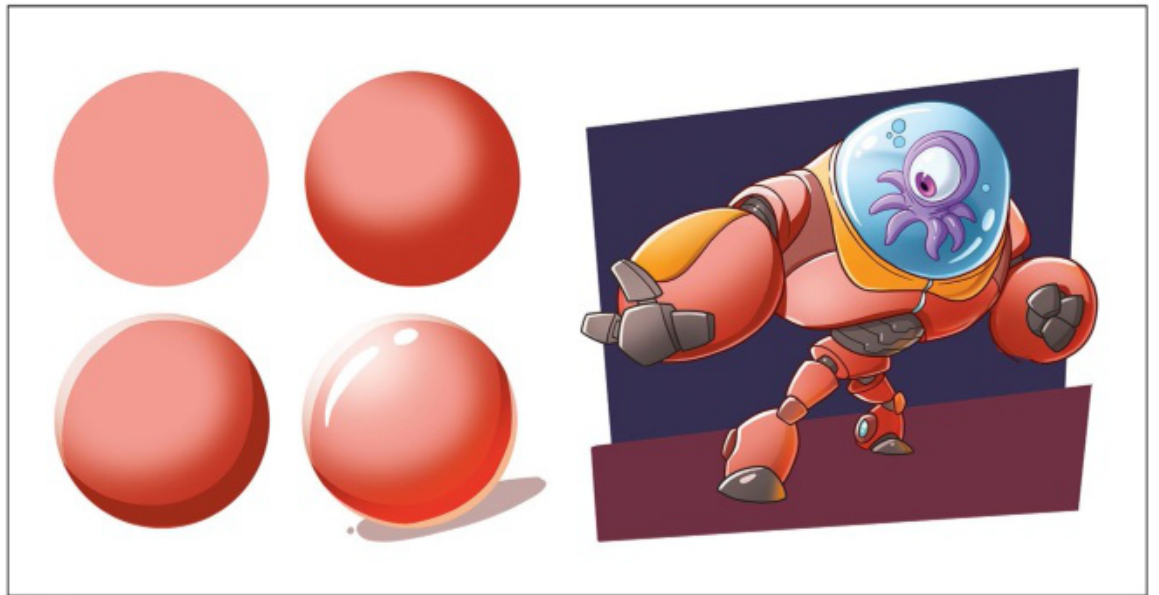
I start with a loose sketch and work up my final design on top of it. I try to keep it sketchy, but also make decisions on the angle of the lines. Once I have the final sketch I start drawing on top of that with a Hard brush. I add a bit of Smoothing in Brush Settings to generate clean lines.





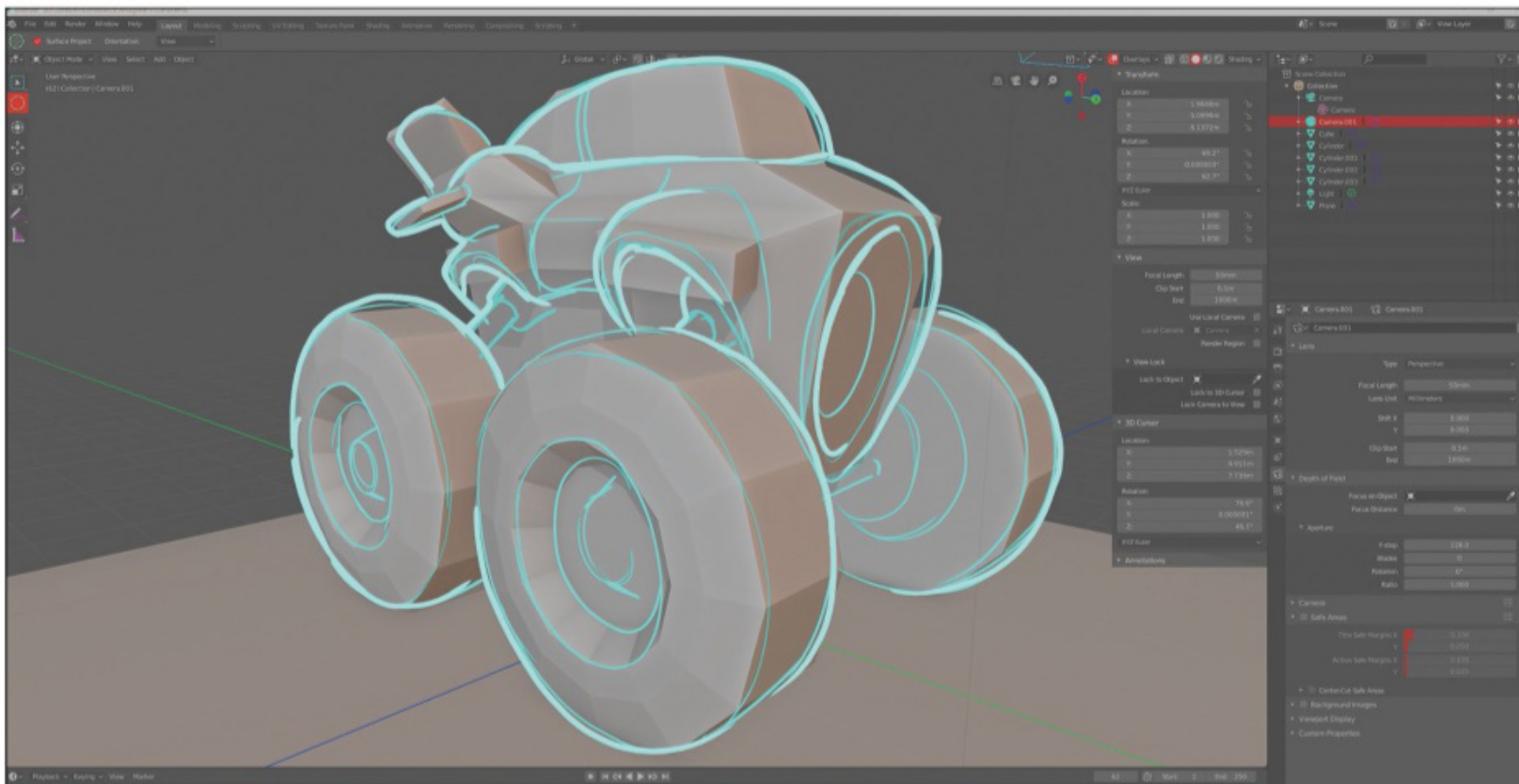
## 11 Colouring the characters

I place a folder beneath the line-work, and start picking different colours and creating the shapes with the Lasso tool. I start with the big shapes and move on to the smaller ones. I work with common colour schemes such as complementary or triadic. For this character I've used a triadic colour scheme, which means using three colours that are opposite each other on the colour wheel.



## 12 Shading the colours

After I've put down my colours it's time for shading. I begin by determining where the light is coming from. If the lighting is complex I start by drawing and shading a ball. Studying this ball should help you work out how the light should affect your characters. I then add highlights and bounce light where necessary.



## 13 Using 3D tools to build objects in the line-up

When I'm creating vehicles such as the buggy and spaceship I'll use 3D to get the perspective right. The model can be pretty basic, so you don't need to be an expert in 3D to use it for your drawing. I use Blender because it's free and has a lot of great settings. You can also use it to see how the lighting works on your objects.

**RESOURCES**

**WORKSHOP BRUSHES**

**PHOTOSHOP**

**CUSTOM BRUSHES: SKETCH**

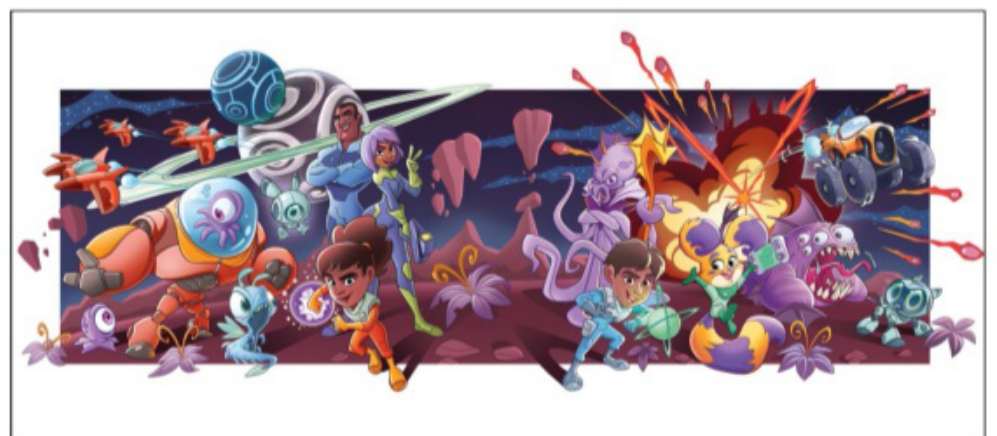
I use this brush to turn my initial ideas into rough sketches.

**INK**

After I've sketched my figures I use this brush to carefully ink them.

**PAINT**

Using this brush and the Gradient tool I'm able to shade the colour shapes.



## 14 Checking over the final artwork

I look at the values in the image to check if everything's readable, and notice that in some places there isn't enough contrast. I spend time painting in some highlights to add more contrast and flip the image to gain a fresh take at it. And now my character line-up is complete!





## Photoshop

# USE VIS-DEV SKILLS TO PAINT A STORY

### Artist PROFILE

**Simon Baek**  
LOCATION: US

Simon is a visual development artist who's worked at Pixar, and is now at Titmouse, Inc as a layout designer.  
[www.skbaek93.com](http://www.skbaek93.com)

**GET YOUR RESOURCES**  
See page 8 now!

**Simon Baek** goes through the basics of visual development to create a fun sense of storytelling within a single painting



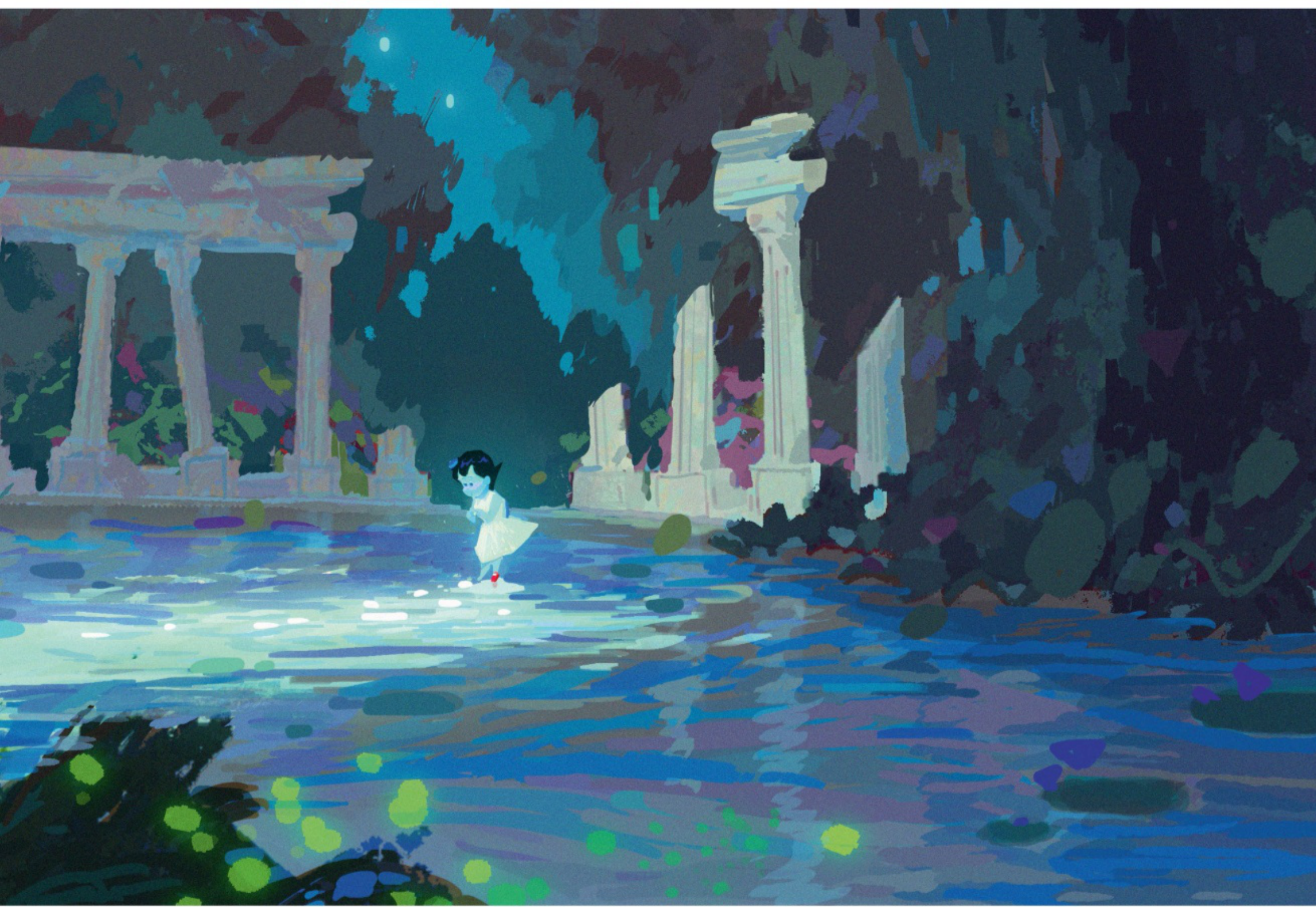
What is visual development? Well, it's designing anything that can help to visualise a story. In this workshop I'll be focusing on pre-visual development, which is about painting scenery. In the pre-visual development phase, artists paint a lot

of scenes that can help visualise the world of the story. I'll cover what you need to look for when you're working on your painting. I consider this as one of the most enjoyable roles in vis-dev work, and I recommend that everyone tries their hand at doing it.

When you paint, the most important thing to consider is the

values. My mentor at Pixar once told me that, "A painting will still look good – even with bad colours – as long as its value is perfect." In this workshop I'll pass on my advice on values, composition and colours that will help to improve your art. Let's go through the steps to help you visualise your imaginary worlds...

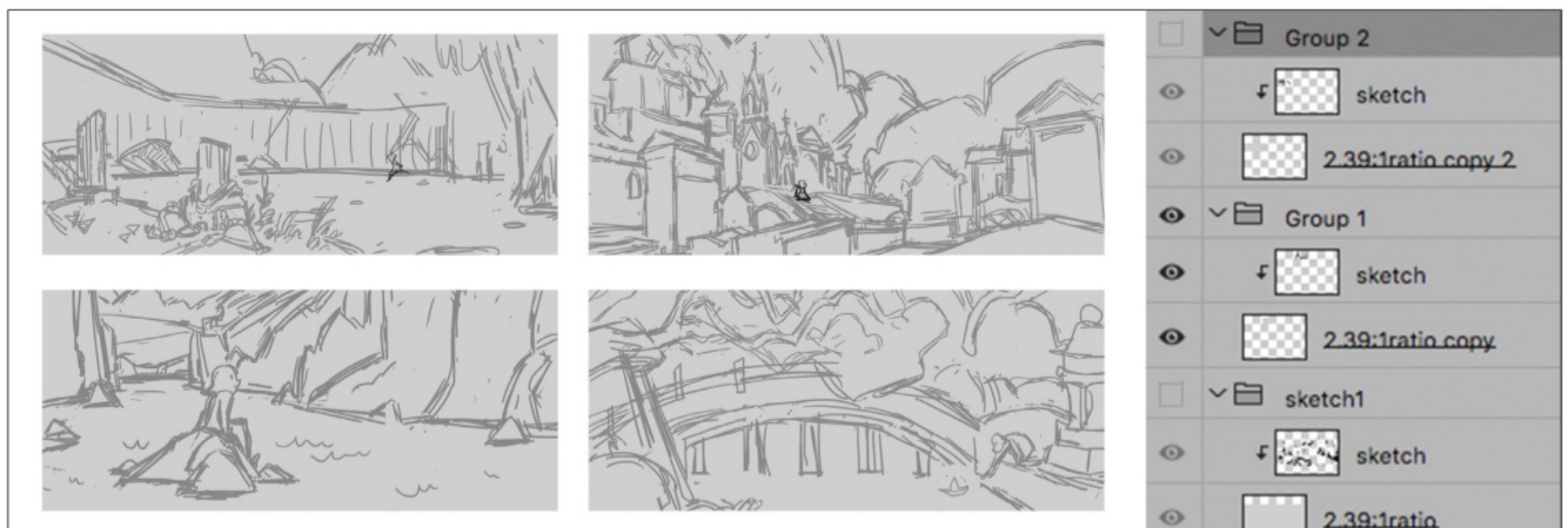




## 1 Obtaining reference and finding inspiration

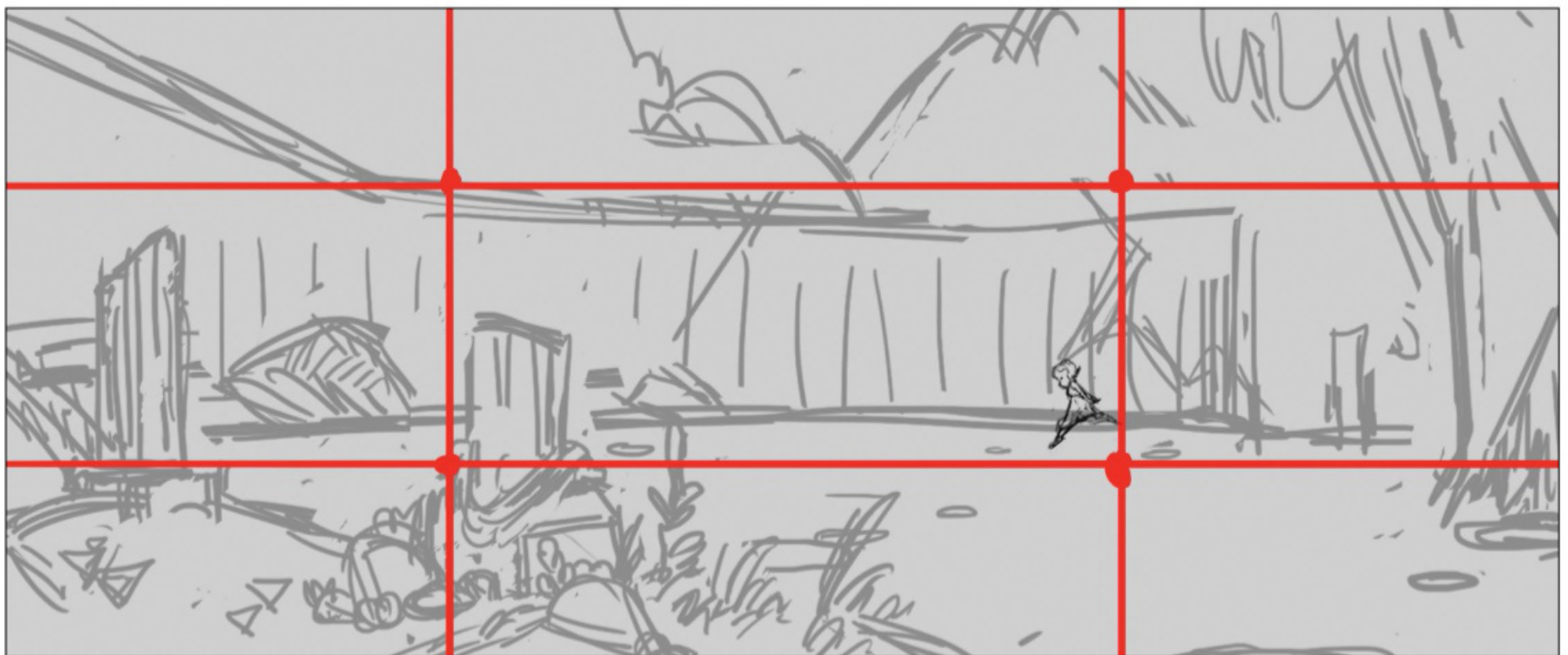
One of my hobbies is travelling, and I'll take photographs when I see a landscape that inspires me to paint when I get back home. Even if you're not keen on travelling or photography, you still need a good source of real-world reference to help you paint imaginative art. Try looking around online for reference that will help take your painting project to the next stage of development. ➡





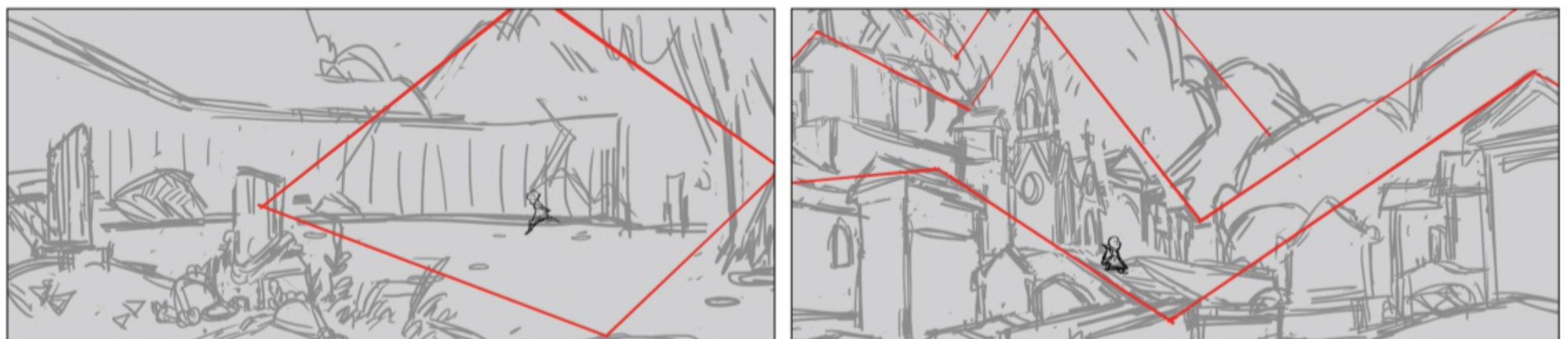
## 2 Produce thumbnail sketches

I begin drawing thumbnails on grey rectangles that match a cinema screen's proportions (2.39:1). I prefer working at theatrical film ratio because it helps me check that my ideas will look interesting on the big screen. I have a tendency to work small, so I can see the whole composition within the frame. I identify and then correct any composition issues at this stage.



## 3 Enhance the basic composition

Composition helps to lead the viewer's eyes to where you want them to be. The basic composition tool is the Rule of Thirds, which divides your painting into sections. It's recommended that you place your focal point on the division lines, which you overlay on your frame.



## 4 Diamonds and zig-zags

You can place a diamond frame around your focal point by creating lines of direction. Each shape exists to help the viewer to follow it. Zig-zags help you to organise your shapes and create visual variety. They also encourage the viewer's eyes to move in certain directions.





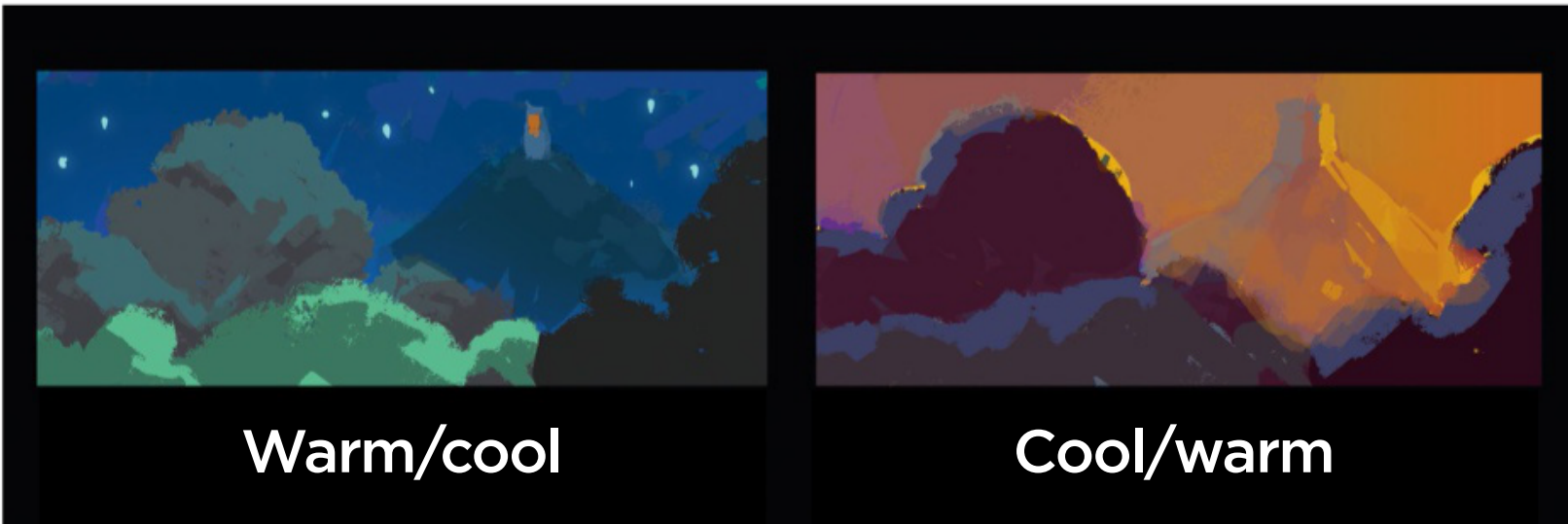
## 5 Perfect your value studies

This is the most important part of the painting process. The values have to look correct before the addition of light or colour. Viewers should be able to read your focal points even at a distance. Make sure you work small so you can check them. Your focal point should be the lightest or the darkest in your values study, or both.



## 6 Group your values sensibly

Even if there is light or shadow, value always works within a similar value range. Neither light nor shadow should break the value range that you choose to work with, unless there's a good reason. For example, shapes within that value range can also help to lead the viewer's eyes.



## 7 Creating contrast through the use of opposites

You can contrast value by using the lightest and darkest colours in the scene. They will capture the viewer's attention right away. Our eyes tend to focus on either the most saturated colour in the painting, or grey that's surrounded by strong colours. Opposites attract the eye, and the same principle applies to shapes, too. ➡➡

**RESOURCES**

**WORKSHOP BRUSHES**

**PHOTOSHOP**

**CUSTOM BRUSHES:**  
**HARD SKETCH BRUSH**

One of my favourite tools. I use this for painting while frequently adjusting the Opacity of brush setting.

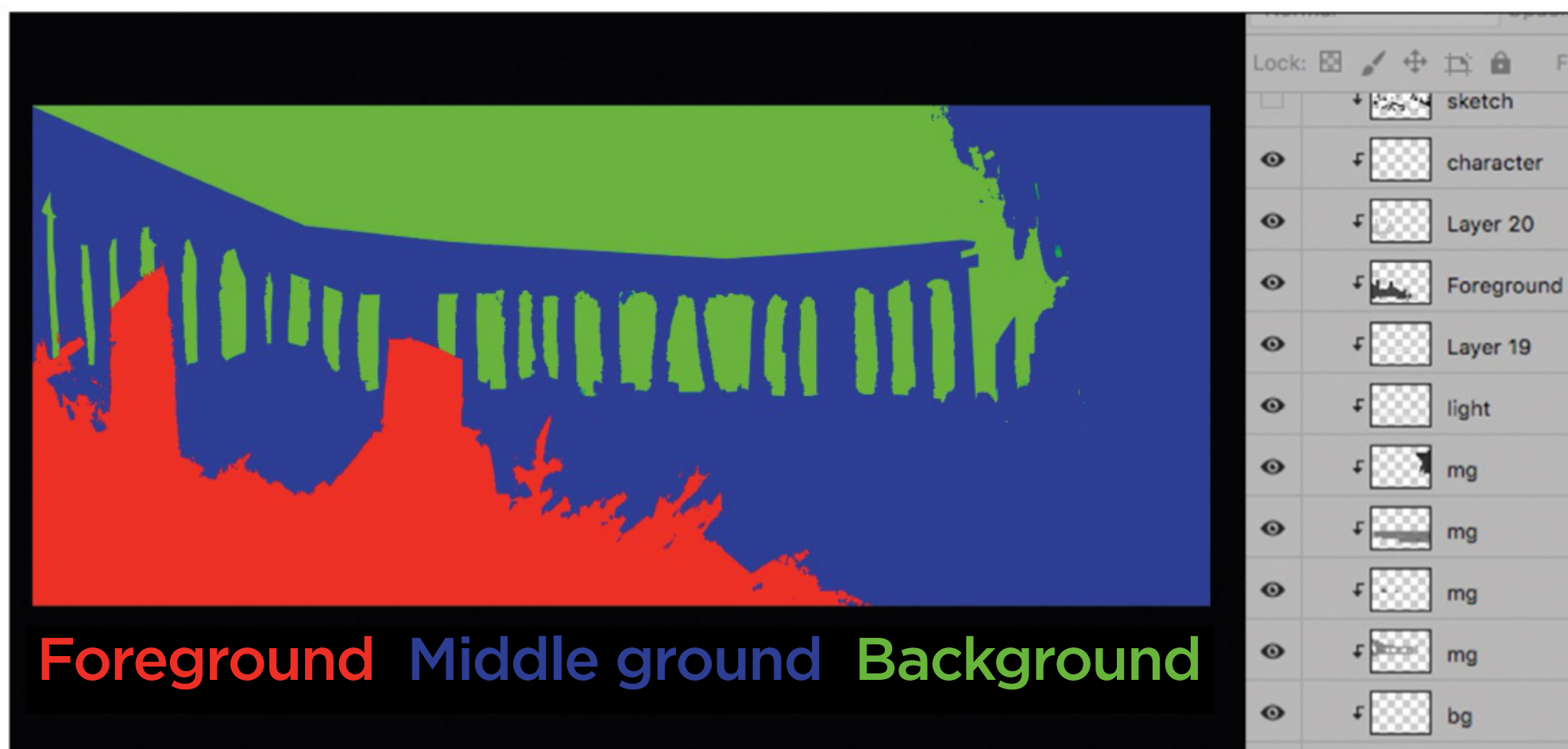
**LIGHT BRUSH**

Ideal for light and soft edges. I use this brush to paint light effects.

**MIXER**

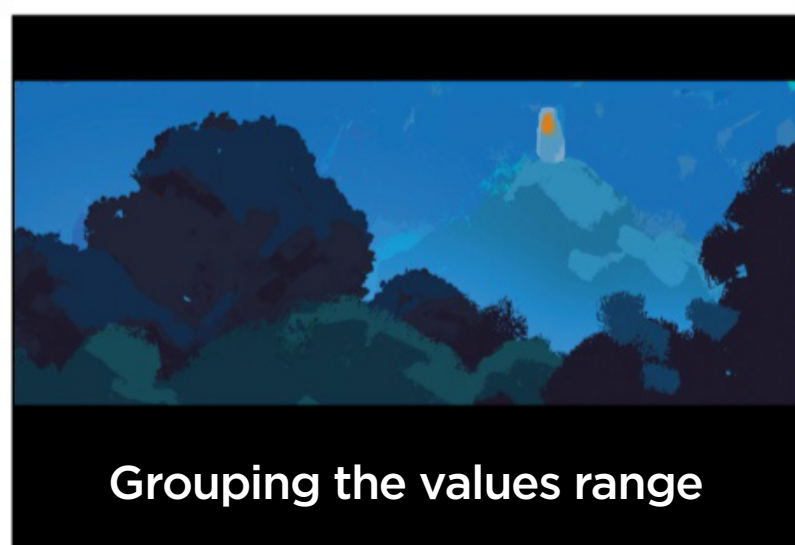
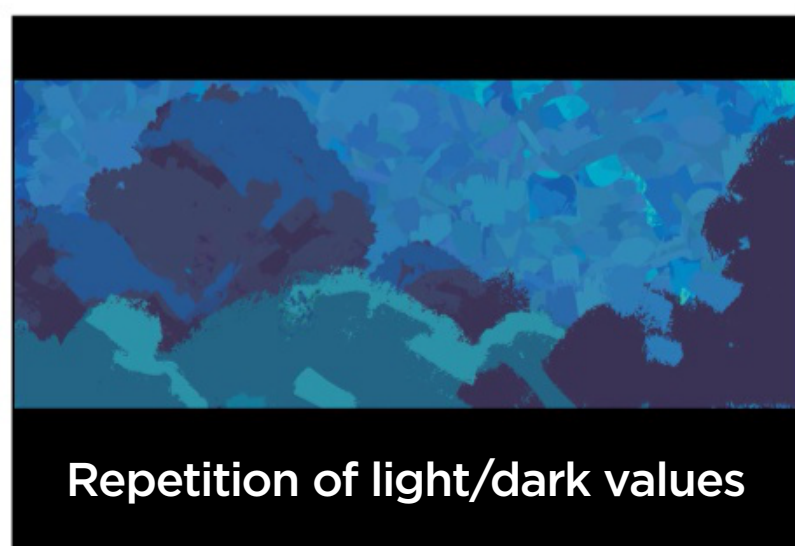
This brush is ideal for generating variations in colours. I use this brush with the Pencil tool.





## 8 Building up the structure of the scene

I always divide my values into three sections: fore-, middle- and background. Each structure divides into more values within the range of the group. You can generate more depth by creating an overlap of shapes. I recommend designing your shapes within a larger structure.



## 9 Creating a sense of space

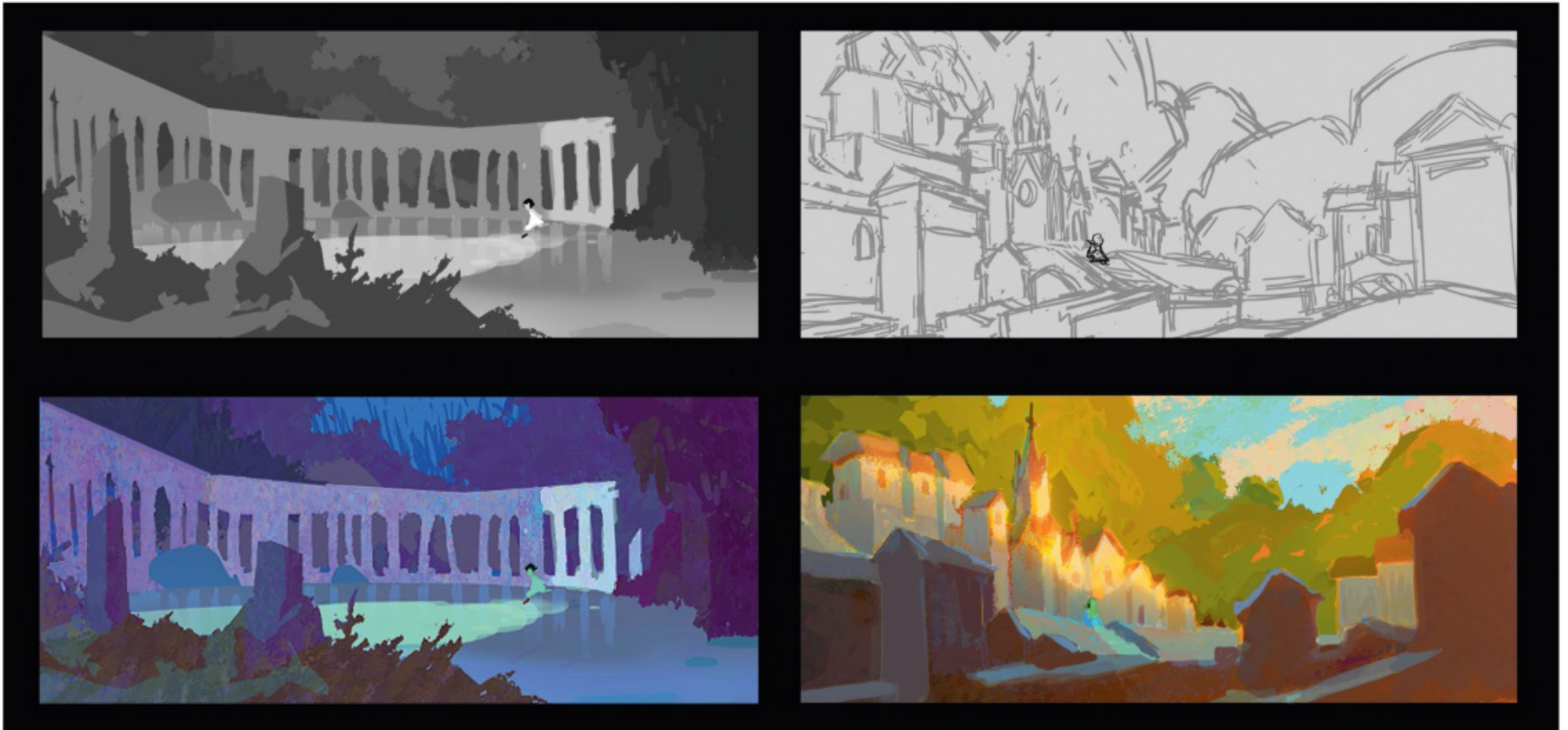
My image will help you see how I create a sense of space between each ground structure. Overlapping light and dark values will help to create depth. You can adjust your value range in Image>Adjustment>Brightness/Contrast. This approach will help you group your values.



## 10 Local colour considerations

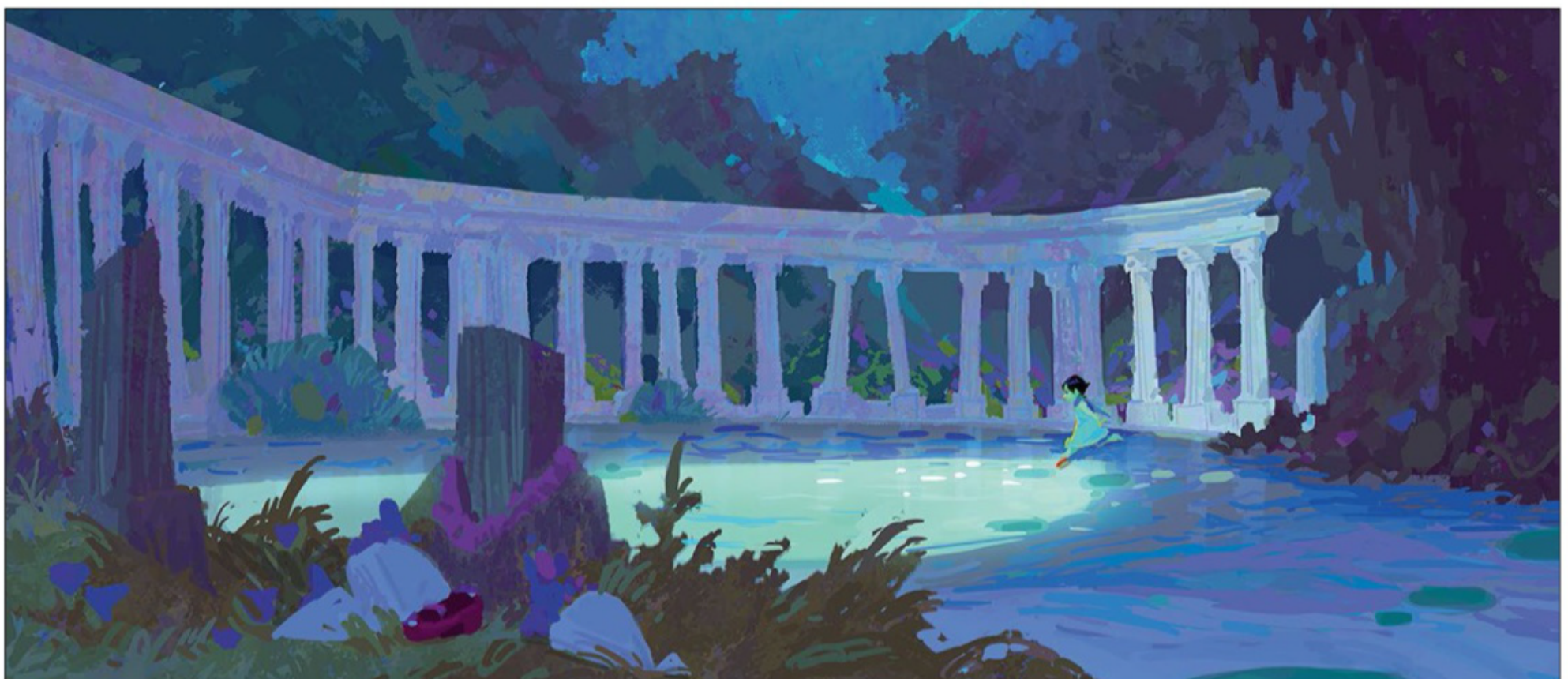
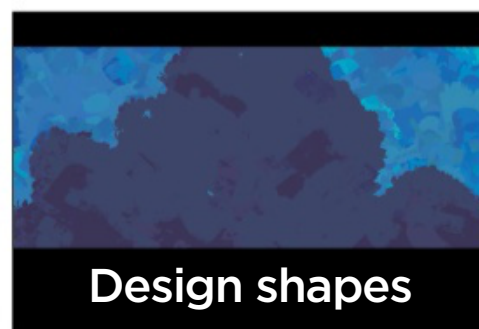
You can use any colour you like, but it's crucial to focus on your value structure. Furthermore, try to use a colour or hue that's next to each other on the colour wheel. It will help to create harmony in the scene. Don't be afraid to play around with colours. You can always use a Hue/Saturation layer to change them.





## 11 Refine your colours and add lighting

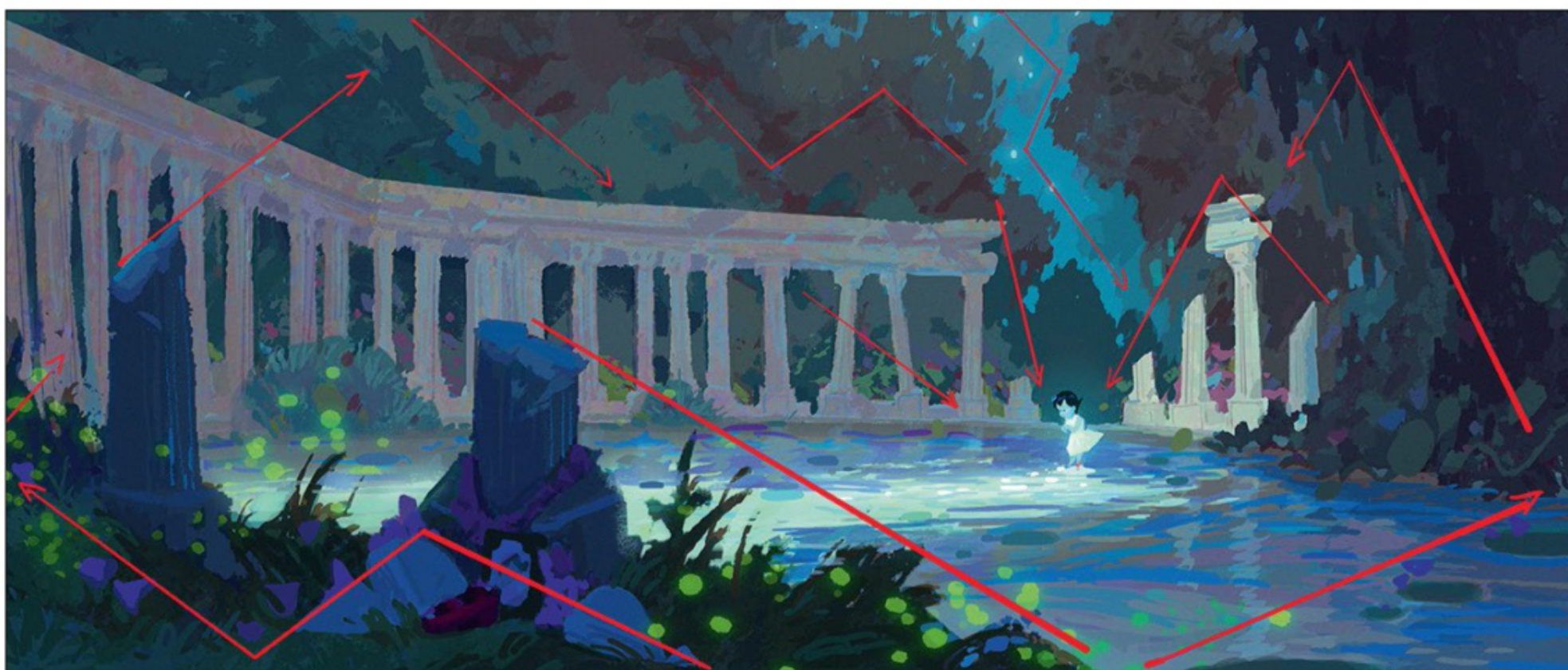
I add more blue and purple to my local colours. You can change your colours by using the Hue/Saturation tool or Color Balance adjustment layers. Next, I use a Hard Light adjustment layer to light the scene: this will mix colours of light and the local colour of your choice.



## 12 Start painting into the environment

First, I use the Mixer brush to generate variations of colours. I add the local colours of an object and then design shapes that enable you to direct the viewer's eyes. Note that to achieve this, your shapes must stay within a similar value zone. Working with colour is identical to building up a value structure, and you can spend time playing with individual colours within that particular range of colours, to see what works best. ➡





## 13 Identifying a flaw in the composition

I make a huge change at this point. The ghost girl's value is too close to the column on the back. My solution is to remove the column and make a zig-zag shape instead (refer back to my advice from step four). Remember that light over dark shapes generates depth and makes an object easier to read. Here, the sky and the forest are framing elements that work together to enhance my focal point.



## 14 What do you see on your first and second read?

The first thing that catches your eyes in this painting is the ghost girl, and the second is the grave-side objects next to the column in the foreground. The girl's bright red shoes help to make the connection with the tombstone. And so this scene is about a little girl who passed away in this pond. She's looking at the pond, but she can't see her reflection. And that's my story in a single painting!



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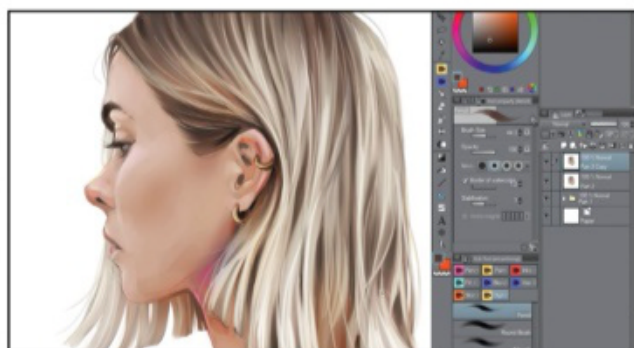
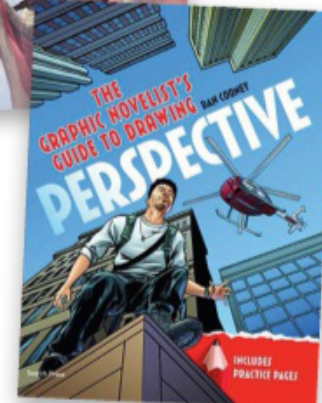
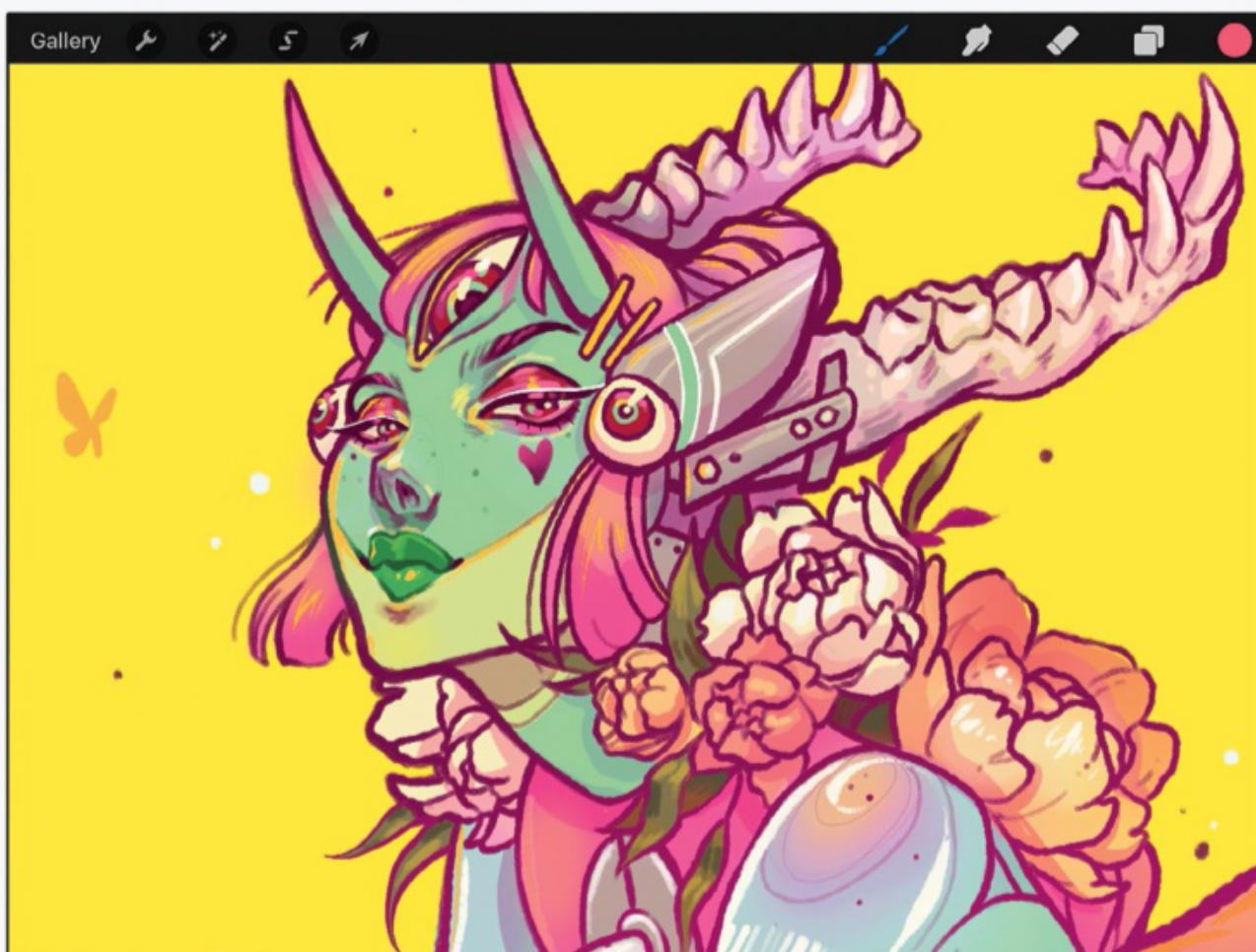
# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



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Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

**5**  
PRODUCTS  
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## HARDWARE

### 96 iPad mini

The fifth version of the iPad mini now supports Apple Pencil, making it a highly portable and slick drawing device.

## TRAINING

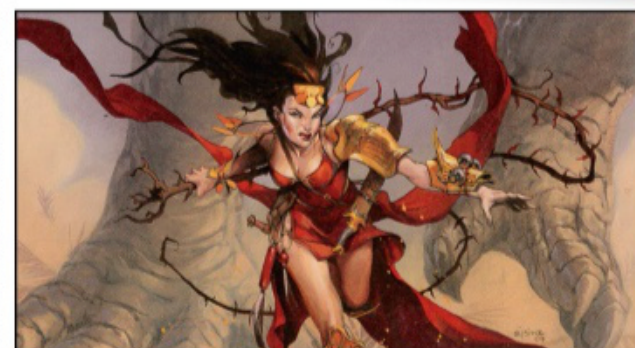
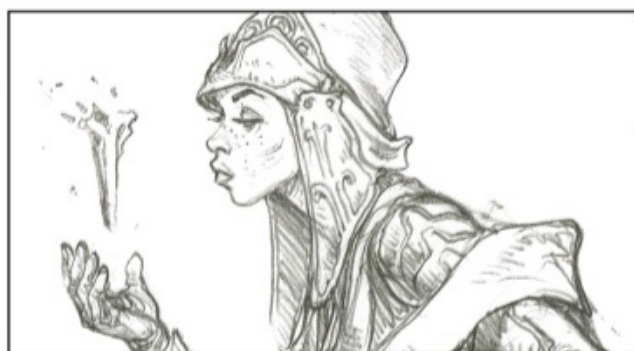
### 99 How To Paint Hair

Illustrator Eric-Anthony Johnson gets back to basics with a beginner-friendly guide to painting hair that looks like the real thing.

## BOOKS

### 100 Karl Kopinski's The Big Kopinski: Volume 1

Delve into the sketches of the Magic: The Gathering artist in a hefty collection that lets the images do all the talking.



### 101 Elsewhere: The Fantasy Art of Jesper Ejsing

Follow the dream-come-true career of Jesper Ejsing with this collection of his art.

### 101 The Graphic Novelist's Guide to Drawing Perspective

Get your head around the basics of perspective with this accessible manual.

RATINGS EXPLAINED

★★★★★ Magnificent

★★★★ Great

★★★ Good

★★ Poor

★ Atrocious

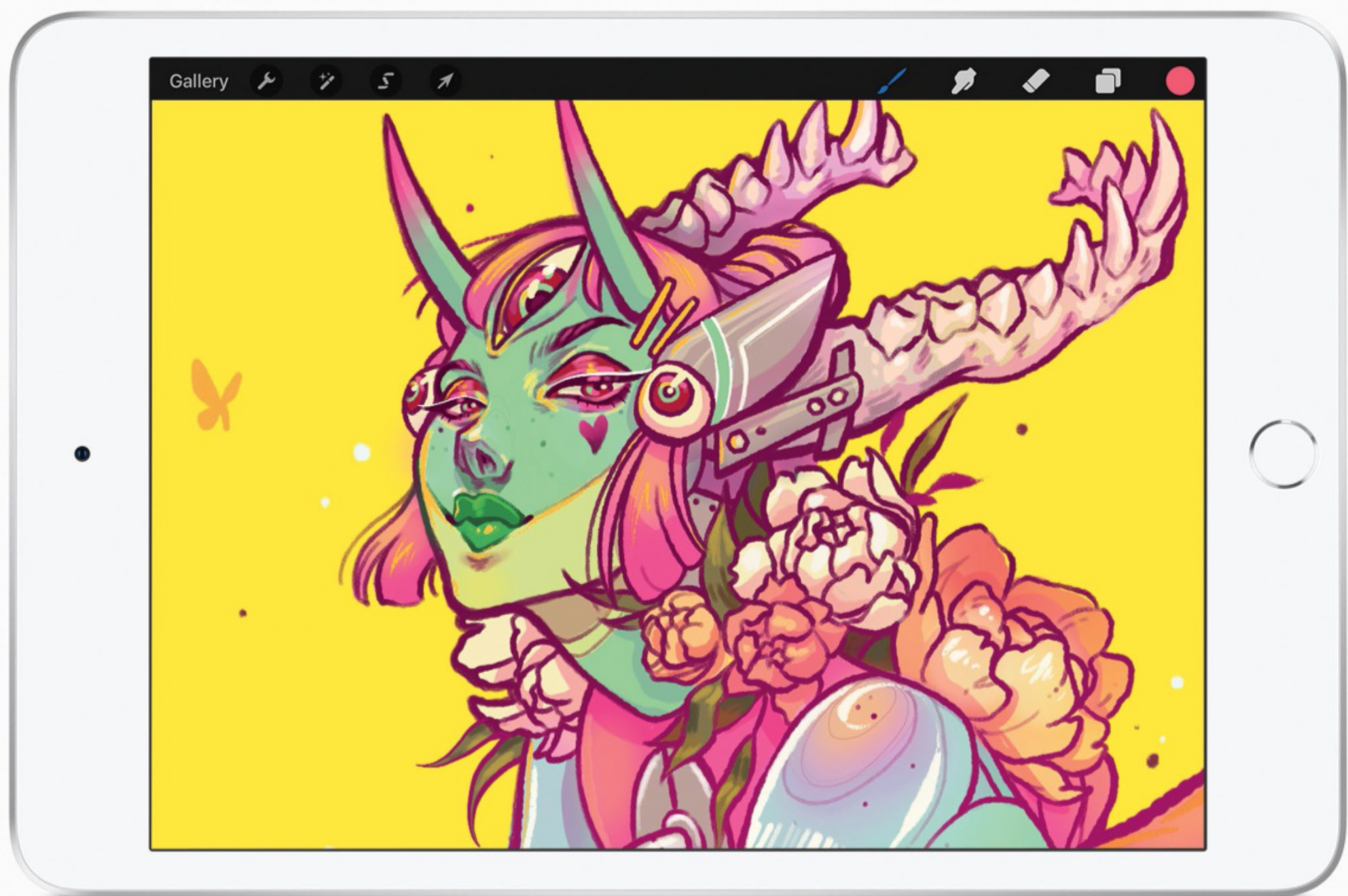
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ImagineFX



95





Artwork: Audra Audair; iPad images © Apple

## iPad mini MAC & PC

The iPad mini's upgraded processor means blisteringly quick performance. Portability is the key reason why the iPad mini is so popular.

**POCKET NOTES** The fifth version of the iPad mini now supports Apple Pencil, making it a highly portable and slick drawing device

**Price** £399 **Company** Apple **Web** [www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

**A**fter Apple launched two new iPad models in early 2019 – a new 10.5-inch iPad Air model and a fifth-generation iPad mini, both supporting Apple's Pencil stylus (£79) – there's now a busy line-up of Apple tablets to choose from, at a range of sizes and price points.

For some illustrators, the iPad mini may be the more interesting new addition to the family. It's super portable – just 300g and 7.9 inches across. It's small enough to fit into almost anything and take anywhere with you. Now that you can use Apple's Pencil with it, this means you can combine a powerful digital tablet with a highly sensitive stylus. Combined with the brilliant range of

drawing apps that are available for iOS – Procreate, ArtRage and SketchBook to name but three – and the iPad mini is clearly a unique creative product.

The downside of this portability is, of course, a smaller screen area. Drawing on a larger tablet is a completely different experience, and perhaps better for more complicated work. And it's worth highlighting that the new iPad mini only supports the first-generation Pencil, which is just as precise as the newer stylus, but lacks its magnetic wireless charging and double-tap action. (Note that the newest version of Apple's stylus still only works with the latest iPad Pro.)

Apple's Pencil stylus is exceptionally precise, and enables you to make use of multiple drawing modes.

There's zero compromise on performance, though. This is the first iPad mini update in four years, upgrading its ageing Apple A8 processor with the powerful A12 Bionic CPU and coming with 3GB of RAM and either 64 or 256GB of on-board storage.

### PHOTOSHOP ON THE MOVE

Rest assured, the device will be more than capable of running even the most advanced illustration tools, and its high level of performance will no doubt be welcome when Adobe launches its reworked Photoshop for iOS later this year, which will bring the whole





“The screen is fully laminated for better outdoors working”



experience of drawing much closer to the desktop experience. That includes full support for layering and a cloud-based file system that will enable you to put the tablet down and then pick up wherever you left off on your PC or Mac.

There have been a few other subtle changes, too. Although the iPad mini's external design and bezel sizes remain unchanged since the very first model in 2012, and the screen has the same 2,048x1,536 and 326 PPI resolution as last time, it's now fully laminated. This

is better for working in sunlight, supporting Apple's True Tone image-adjustment and P3 wide colour.

Although the more powerful iPad Pro remains our first choice for illustration, it's expensive (prices start at £769). The iPad mini is significantly cheaper and a more portable device, but we realise that screen size is about personal preference, and what you think you'll be using a tablet for. Certainly, for sketching duties while out and about, Apple's latest mini is more than up to the task in hand. ●

When the new Photoshop launches for iOS, the iPad could become far more useful than merely a means of sketching on the go.

With its boost in processing power the iPad mini is more than capable of handling video-editing duties.

## DETAILS

### Features

- 7.9-inch laminated IPS touchscreen display
- Apple Pencil support (first generation)
- Apple A12 Bionic processor
- 3GB RAM
- 64GB/256GB storage options
- TouchID
- Headphone jack

### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 7 or later (for syncing with iTunes), iTunes 12.7, internet access, Apple ID  
**Mac:** OS X 10.11.6 (for syncing with iTunes), iTunes 12.8, internet access, Apple ID

### Rating



## IN FOCUS

### THREE MORE TABLETS

Don't fancy going on a mini adventure? Try these...

#### iPad Pro (2018)

**Web** [www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

**Price** From £969 (12.9-inch)



Along with a completely new look, which sees an almost bezel-less design, the iPad Pro is the only Apple tablet that's available in 12.9 inches, offering a massive screen area that some people may prefer working on.

#### Surface Pro 6

**Web** [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

**Price** From £799



Microsoft's 12.3-inch Surface tablet can run the same Windows software that you use on the desktop computer, which could make your workflow significantly more efficient when switching between devices.

#### iPad Air (2019)

**Web** [www.apple.com/uk](http://www.apple.com/uk)

**Price** £479



The latest iPad Air offers the same level of performance as the iPad mini with its 7.9-inch screen and the same first-generation Apple Pencil support, but for an extra £80 you benefit from a larger 9.7-inch display area.



| THE WORLD'S LEADING DESIGN MAG |

TURN CLIENTS INTO SMALL GIANTS Jim Bull on the design language of 'lessism'

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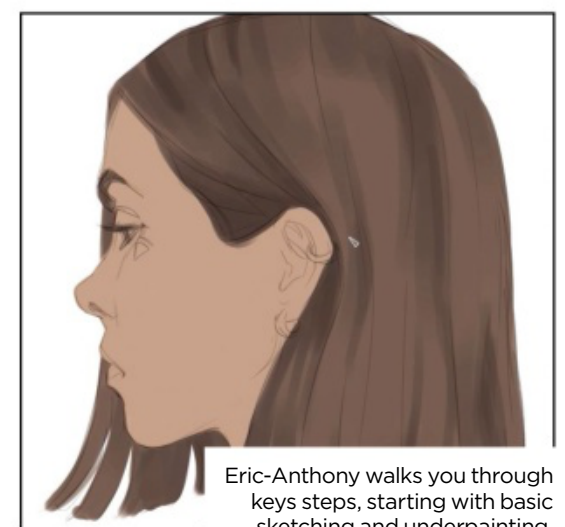
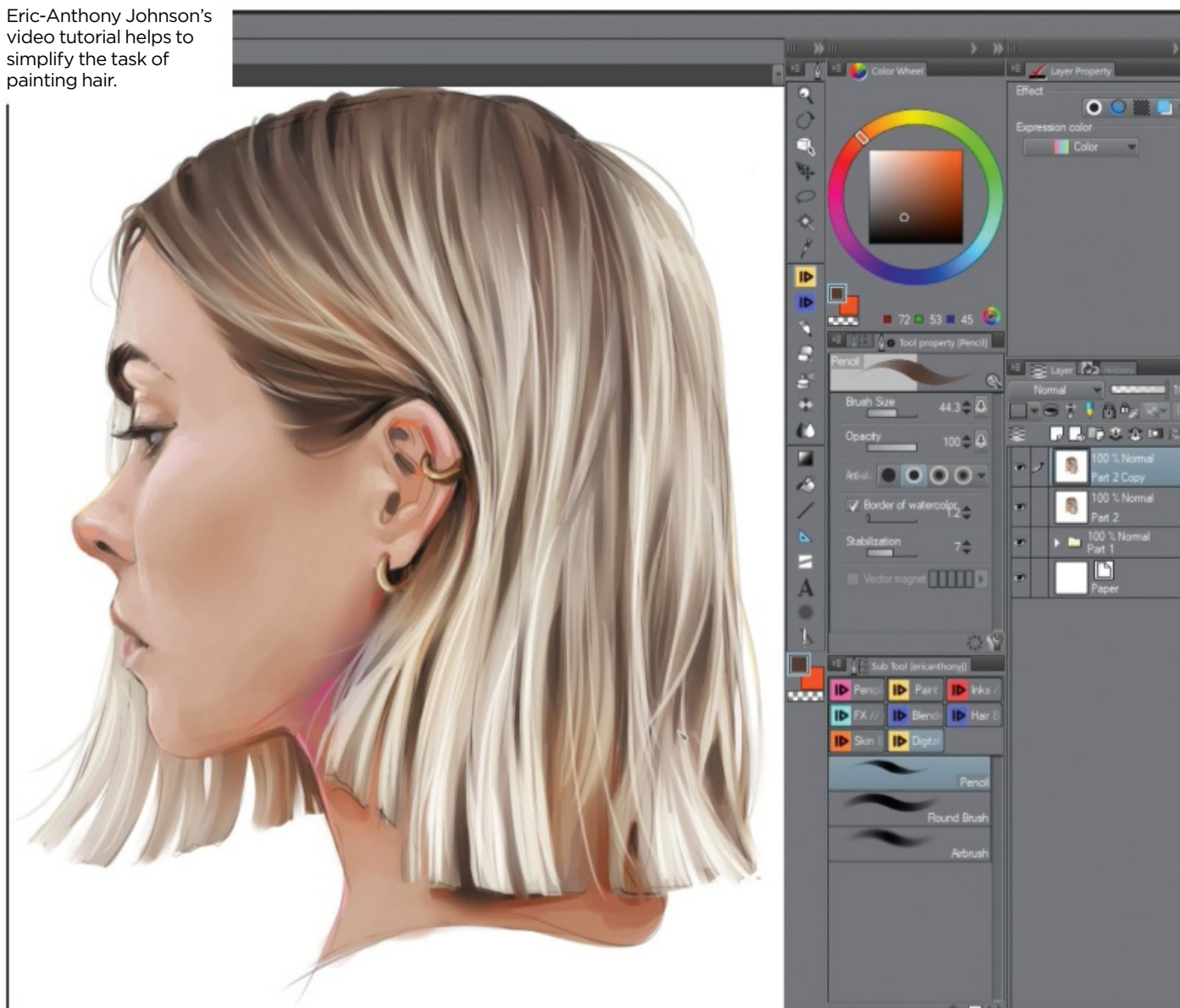
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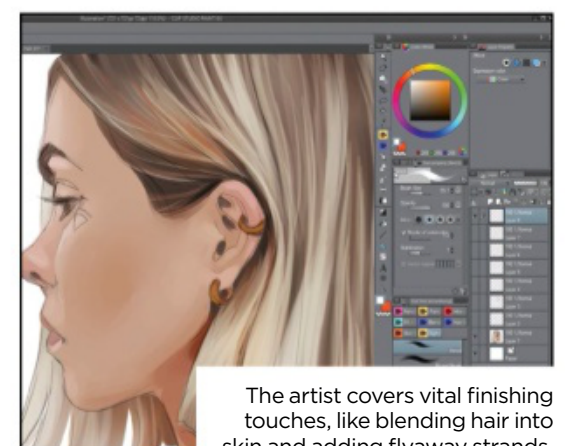
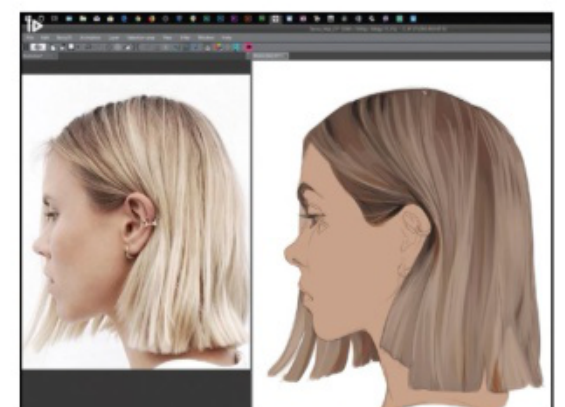
DESIGN  
MATTERS



Eric-Anthony Johnson's video tutorial helps to simplify the task of painting hair.



Eric-Anthony walks you through keys steps, starting with basic sketching and underpainting.



The artist covers vital finishing touches, like blending hair into skin and adding flyaway strands.

## How To Paint Hair

**BRUSHING UP** Eric-Anthony Johnson gets back to basics with a beginner-friendly guide to painting hair that looks like the real thing

**Publisher** Eric-Anthony Johnson **Price** \$20 **Format** Download **Web** [www.gumroad.com/ericanthonyj](http://www.gumroad.com/ericanthonyj)

**A**long with hands, hair is one of the those parts of the human body that can make otherwise rational artists tremble with fear. It's a challenging feature to paint so that it looks convincing, but it's pretty much impossible to avoid – unless your thing is Professor X fan art.

Eric-Anthony Johnson's video offers a foolproof way of rendering hair that looks the part, even if you've little art experience to date. He presents every step in real time, narrating as he paints and covering every detail, from brush selection (you won't need many) to finishing touches such as blending the hair into the skin for a more natural feel. The basic technique is to start with dark colours and work your way through to thinly painted highlights, but it's the details Eric-Anthony reveals that will make all the difference to the results you can achieve.

### DETAILS

#### Topics covered

- Initial sketch
- Brush selection
- Clipping masks
- Underpainting
- Adding highlights
- Blending skin tones and hair

#### Length

106 minutes

#### Rating



If you're a beginner, you'll also learn some basic digital software craft that you'll find incredibly useful. You'll see how to use layers to build up detail in a way that enables you to undo mistakes more easily, and how clipping masks can give you control over where you can and can't paint.

Eric-Anthony shows his techniques using Clip Studio Paint (the painting package formerly known as Manga Studio), but you'll find the same tools in Photoshop, Procreate or virtually any other art software. You also get a few Clip Studio Paint brushes to add to your repertoire.

There's little in this video that experienced artists won't have read or watched somewhere else, or figured out for themselves. Yet if you're still quite new to digital art, Eric-Anthony's clear explanations and straightforward approach will get you on the fast track towards painting realistic hair.

### ARTIST PROFILE ERIC-ANTHONY JOHNSON

Based in Germany, Eric-Anthony is a professional illustrator and concept designer. He's a self-taught artist who's worked for a range of clients, including HBO, Vice, Jess3 and Jägermeister. Eric-Anthony is very active on social media, creating YouTube tutorials for an audience of over 80,000 subscribers and sharing his sketches and concept pieces on Instagram and Twitter. He also has a Patreon feed where supporters can get access to exclusive sketches and behind-the-scenes images.

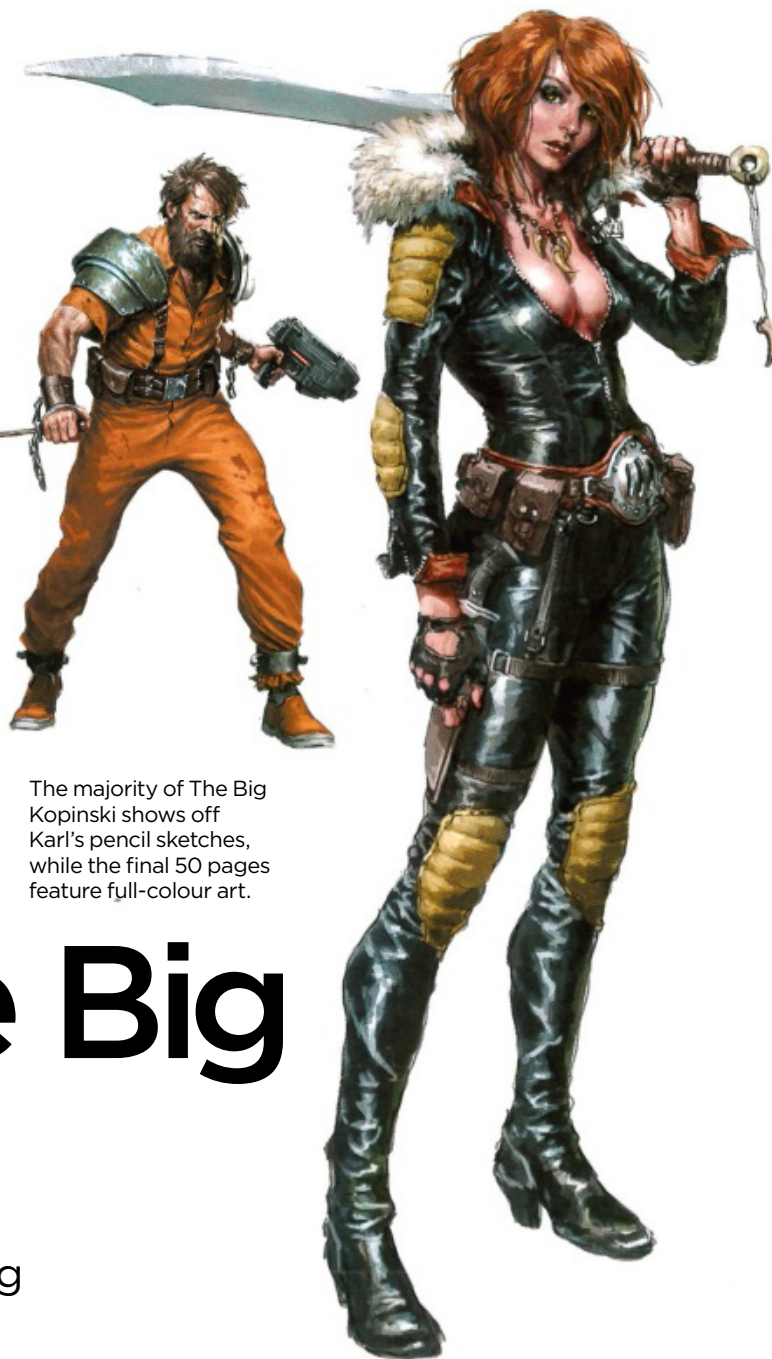
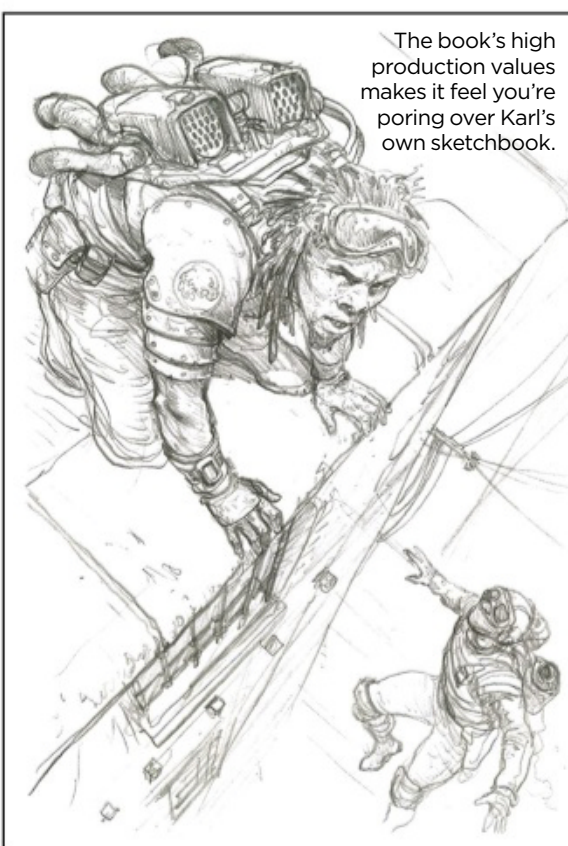
[www.artstation.com/ericanthonyj](http://www.artstation.com/ericanthonyj)



Karl Kopinski's take on the Dark Knight, wandering around Wayne Manor on a dark night.



The book's high production values makes it feel you're poring over Karl's own sketchbook.



The majority of The Big Kopinski shows off Karl's pencil sketches, while the final 50 pages feature full-colour art.

# Karl Kopinski's The Big Kopinski: Volume 1

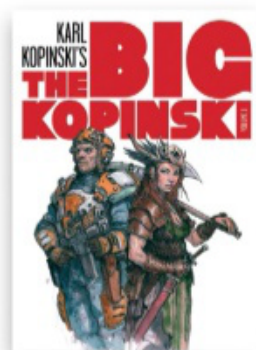
**SILENT TYPE** Delve into the sketches of the Magic: The Gathering artist in a hefty collection that lets the images do all the talking

**Author** Karl Kopinski **Publisher** Caurette **Price** £61 **Web** [www.caurette.com](http://www.caurette.com) **Available** Now

**R**arely will the review of a book clock up a higher word count than the book itself. Although it's also unusual for an author to use their foreword to admit that words aren't their "strong point". Not that we feel short-changed, though...

This first volume of work by Karl Kopinski dedicates its page space to presenting hundreds of sketches, ink drawings, paintings and digital illustrations. As the book's blurb points out, Karl isn't satisfied with just drawing for his clients, which include the likes of Wizards of the Coast, Ubisoft and Games Workshop. No, for Karl, drawing is an obsession he'll indulge at the slightest opportunity. And by the looks of the volume and range of quality work on display here, we're happy to let him get on with it.

The main bulk of this collection is set aside to pencil illustrations. Printed at such a large size without any text getting in the way enables the reader to easily study Karl's line work and technique. Balancing mark making



and shading is made to look easy, and there's plenty to learn for pouring over page after page of sketches of warriors, fantasy beasts, futuristic bikers and Napoleonic horse riders.

And even though we don't hear from Karl through his words, these illustrations give enough of an insight into his character. A sketch of Batman creeping around Wayne Manor by torchlight in a Bat-signal branded dressing gown and slippers tells us just

“There's plenty to learn for pouring over sketches of warriors, beasts and bikers”

as much about his sense of humour and influences than words ever could.

The odd ink illustration is included, but they're in the minority. Meanwhile, the last 50-odd pages change gear and showcase Karl's skills as a traditional and digital painter. Each page is dedicated to a single character, with New York gangsters standing



Volume 1 features the contents of Karl's two earlier self-published sketchbooks, along with new work.

alongside power-suited gorillas. It's a crash course of character design inspiration and a masterclass in how to push various mediums.

Admittedly, it would've been nice if there were an index to archive these illustrations. And the hefty price tag is hard to justify, despite the high-calibre of work the book contains. But perhaps we all need to keep Karl's clipped outlook in mind while enjoying these images, "I'm just trying to learn every day and have fun."

**RATING** ★★★★★



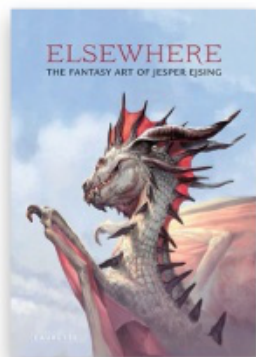
# Elsewhere: The Fantasy Art of Jesper Ejsing

**DUNGEON MASTER** Follow the dream-come-true career of Jesper Ejsing with this comprehensive collection of his fantasy art and illustrations

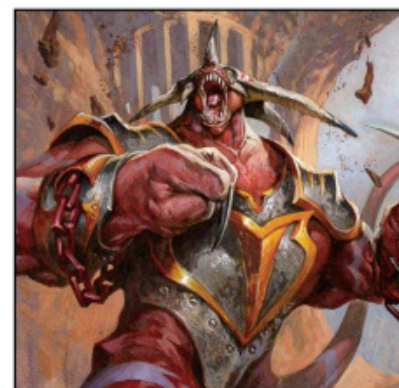
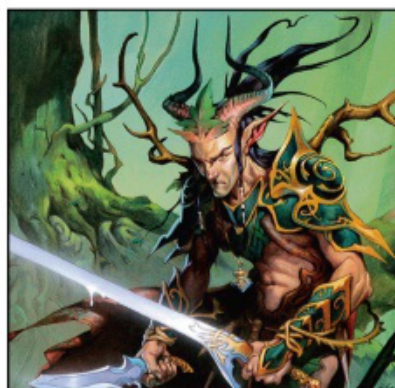
**Author** Jesper Ejsing **Publisher** Caurette **Price** £61 **Web** [www.caurette.com](http://www.caurette.com) **Available** Now

**A** half-orc warrior drawn on a D&D character sheet was Jesper Ejsing's first step on a path to becoming a professional fantasy artist. Fast forward a few years and the Danish artist would be drawing warriors and monsters for the RPG itself.

Elsewhere: The Fantasy Art of Jesper Ejsing tracks the course between these two events. The route includes damsels, dragons... and a



One of Jesper Ejsing's many acrylic pieces for Magic: The Gathering, entitled Bloodthorn Taunter.



As well creating Magic art (far left), Jesper's also worked on other Wizards of the Coast properties, such as the now-defunct Kaijudo card game (left).

wizard created by Jesper for a book he wrote. The character's name – Jarvis – would have an uncanny connection to an art director – Jeremy Jarvis – at his dream client: Wizards of the Coast.

There's plenty for fantasy art fans to enjoy here, with hundreds of illustrations spanning Jesper's career and a brief insight into his process. Images are grouped thematically and although this is helpful, the book can

be hard to navigate as the various categories have considerable overlap.

The book's steep cost will be another barrier to entry for some readers, and it's up to them to track the trajectory of Jesper's career by spotting the development of stylistic quirks. Luckily, if your pockets are deep enough then this isn't too much of a chore.

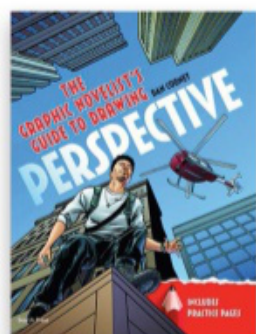
**RATING** ★★★★★☆

# The Graphic Novelist's Guide to Drawing Perspective

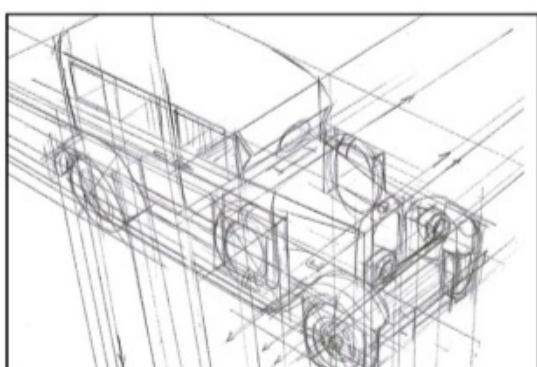
**VANTAGE POINTERS** Get your head around the basics of perspective with this accessible and activity packed manual

**Author** Daniel Cooney **Publisher** Search Press **Price** £13 **Web** [www.searchpress.com](http://www.searchpress.com) **Available** Now

**H**ave you struggled to master the rules of perspective? Then you're not alone. The author of this guide, comic artist Daniel Cooney, admits in his introduction that he, too, left art classes wracked with frustration. Once the methods here click though, you'll wonder how you ever drew scenes without them.



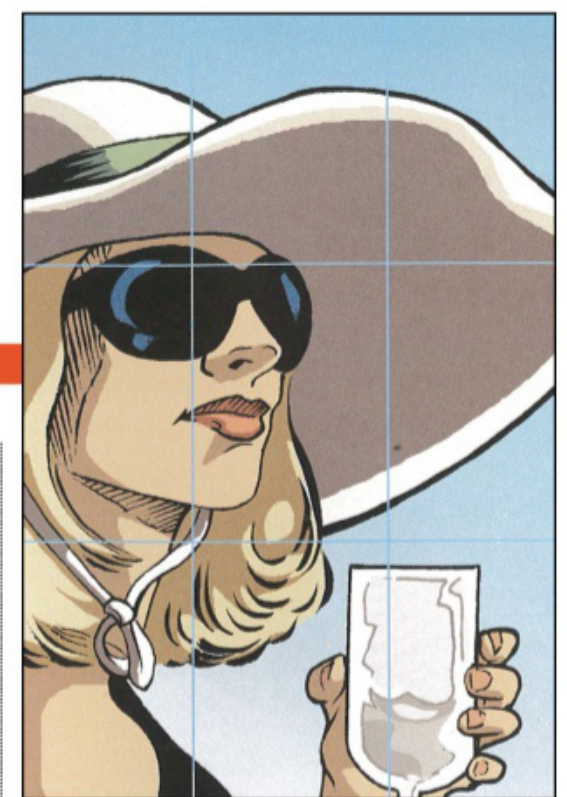
In one of the many exercises in the book, you'll use three-point perspective to block out and draw a vehicle.



Daniel's pain is the reader's gain though, because he knows exactly how to translate the principles of perspective into plain English. Broken down into three main chapters, this guide covers the three perspective points one by one. And each section is accompanied by examples from appropriate comics to show the reader how the rules can look in action.

On top of this, each chapter contains exercises and special drawing paper to help budding artist experiment with what they've learnt. These pages, with their bespoke radial lines and grids, are great added value that help to make the book practical as well as informative.

Anyone who's attended even the most basic of art courses will likely be



Daniel Cooney uses the Rule of Thirds to direct the viewer's eyes to key elements in this composition.

familiar with these rules. But for artists who are just starting out or in need of a refresher, this guide contains everything you need to know to make your images leap off the page or disappear into the sunset.

**RATING** ★★★★★☆



# WANTED!



# SFX

THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE  
SCI-FI AND FANTASY MAGAZINE

## ON SALE 22 MAY



**NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS**  
**ImagineFX**

# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists



## This issue:

### **104 Traditional art FXPosé**

Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional art, which has been sent in by you!

### **108 Workshop: Self-development through art**

Sam Guay creates a poem-inspired painting and tells us why self-evaluation is an important part of her process with personal projects.

### **114 First Impressions: Gary Gianni**

Colouring in cartoon characters helped hone this comic artist's skills at an early age.



# FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Mr Cenz

**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** Spray paint, acrylic **WEB:** [www.mrcenz.com](http://www.mrcenz.com)

Mr Crenz started painting in 1988 when he discovered hip-hop culture and graffiti art. His work can now be found on streets and in galleries all over the world.



### 1 GLOBAL TRANSMISSIONS

"My style is full of funk and movement, and fuses different skills such as photorealism, illustration and graffiti letter-forms. I like to keep my work open to interpretation."

### 2 ASTRAL TRAVELLING

"I work from photographs to create interpretations of strong and spiritual women, which are abstracted in a spontaneous way to create mysterious compositions."

### 3 FAST FORWARD

"I work hard to make sure that each piece I create is very individual and distinctive. I'm proud to say that I've spent years mastering the art of the spray can."









## Paolo Petrangeli

**LOCATION:** Italy **MEDIA:** Watercolour, acrylics, ink, coloured pencils **WEB:** [www.paolopetrangeli.carbonmade.com](http://www.paolopetrangeli.carbonmade.com)

Paolo is inspired by old fairy tales – especially ones that combine sweetness and a darker side. “I love painting bizarre characters that live in perfect harmony with other animals and creatures,” he says.

### 1 VIANDANTI

“An unexpected journey, where what matters is not the destination but rather the discoveries you make along the way.”



### 2 THEY WON'T EAT YOU

“This illustration explores the innocence of the little pig, saved from slaughter by a weird robot and its crow friend.”



### 3 WELCOME

“The theme of this work is the connection – both spiritual and physical – that we have with our own kingdom. The child invites us to enter its world.”

### 4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

“As a child I was captivated by the tale of Alice in Wonderland. It helped open my mind to a surreal and fantastic world.”

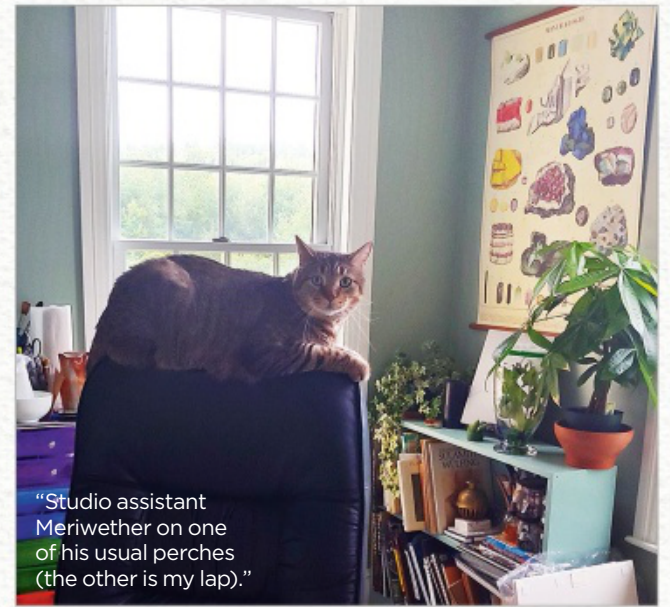












"Studio assistant Meriwether on one of his usual perches (the other is my lap)."

Inks

Watercolour

Acrylics

# SELF-DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ART

**SAM GUAY** creates a poem-inspired painting and tells us why self-evaluation is an important part of her process with personal projects

Over the past few years I've been fortunate enough to spend my time focusing on my personal work – whether it be my tarot project, gallery art, or things that are just for fun. With each piece I create, I set goals for myself, experiment, and evaluate my piece when I'm done. Though these things aren't obvious when you look at my final paintings I consider

"I recently updated to a new tablet from the one seen here below. Most of my work is traditional so I didn't require anything fancy, but the new tablet enables me to draw directly on the screen, which feels more natural to me."



them just as important to my process as the technical part.

Setting goals for my work, such as drawing a challenging subject or working with unusual colours, gives me a gauge for the success of my piece. By evaluating my own work I can document my growth, think critically about my choices, and maintain a healthier relationship with my work. If I'm happy with a piece I can identify why that is – I don't need to rely on social media for any validation. Often I'll feel frustrated with a piece, so instead of dismissing it and considering myself a failure, writing about my art gives me a better perspective and forces me to answer why it's not working and what I can do to create paintings I'm happier with. Plus, if I do consider my piece unsuccessful, at least I've learned from the experience and can plot the next steps forward.

Choosing something small to experiment with in each painting enables me to slowly integrate new techniques instead of making a

drastic change in my work. I don't paint on my original line-work, I scan the line-work and print it onto watercolour paper. The benefit of this is that if an experiment goes wrong and I need to start over, I don't have to draw the entire piece again. This time I experimented with using SpectraFix, and it worked out for me.

For this piece I began with the poem *Necklace of Wrens* by Michael Hartnett as my inspiration. I watched videos of fledgling wrens, because I knew drawing them would be a challenge. Referencing a video made it possible to see their natural movements, which was more helpful than a still image. The lessons that I found through this process will give me a better mental toolkit with which to approach future paintings.



**Informed by nature, dreams and the occult, Sam's work explores our inner landscapes. She's the creator of the Blood**

**Moon Tarot, and aims to provide the tools people need to find their own path. You can see her art at [www.samguay.com](http://www.samguay.com).**



# Traditional Artist **Workshop**

## MATERIALS

### WATERCOLOURS

■ Daniel Smith Green gold, Perylene violet, Wisteria, Indanthrone blue, Perylene green, Lavender, Quinacridone burnt orange

■ Finetec Champagne silver

### INKS

■ Liquitex Carbon black ink

■ FW Sepia ink

### BRUSHES

■ Jumbo Round silver black velvet brush

■ Raphael Kolinsky brushes in sizes 1, 2 and 4

### PAPER

■ Arches Hot Press watercolour pad

■ Clearprint Drafting vellum

### MISC

■ White Acryla gouache

■ Brown paper tape

■ Masking tape

■ Hardboard panel

■ Mechanical pencil

■ Eraser

■ White Sakura gelly roll pen

■ SpectraFix fixative



## 1 *Thumbnails and sketches*

After collecting my references and inspirations I create multiple thumbnails, then choose one and work it up into a sketch. Although I can work digitally or traditionally during this process, I choose to work digitally this time because it's more time-efficient for resizing things, moving them around and trying ideas out.



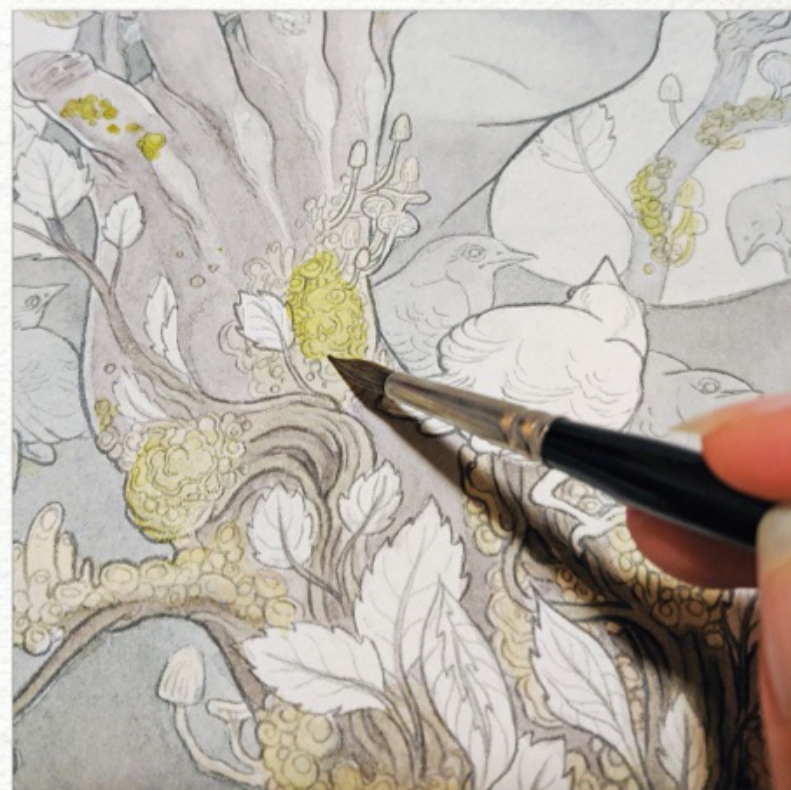
## 2 *Drawing the details on vellum*

I print out my finished sketch and tape it to a piece of drafting vellum. Drafting vellum has a lovely, smooth surface and I often use sheets of vellum like analog versions of Photoshop layers when I want to test major changes in the drawing. Using a mechanical pencil, I work out all the tiny details and finalise the line-work.



## 3 *Painting preparation*

I scan my line-work, clean it up digitally and print it out on watercolour paper. To stretch the paper I soak it and attach it to a board with brown tape, adding masking tape once the paper is dry. I also print out some small versions to experiment with colour, and make myself a colour chart for reference.



## 4 *Initial washes*

Using a neutral colour I begin building up thin layers to create value, lifting the paint with a paper towel in areas that I want to keep light. After the neutral layers I add some warm and cool layers, and add bright washes in areas where I want saturated colours to pop through.





## 5 *Finalising an underpainting*

Once I have the basic washes done I continue building up thin layers and begin fleshing out some of the details and defining different areas of the painting with colour, value and texture. My favourite way to create texture is by painting many small lines, like pencil marks.



## 6 *Inking helps to recover lost line-work*

At some point I begin to lose the lines in the layers of paint, and at this point I go over the lines with a brush and ink. I prefer using a brush over pens because I'm more comfortable controlling a brush and can achieve more variation in line-weight.



## 7 *A process of push and pull, and developing areas*

After this point my process becomes many hours of building up areas of the painting, then stepping back to see what needs to be adjusted in order to have all parts of the painting work harmoniously together. I take a lot of breaks to give my eyes a rest. Clear eyes are much better at finding areas that need more attention. ➡➡







## 8 *Painting in golden branches*

As a personal touch I like to add metallic paint to the branches and stems in pieces that have a lot of plant life. Not only does this symbolise the value and life within seemingly inanimate plants, it adds an extra treat for people who come to shows or purchase work from me and get to see it in person.



## 9 *Adding highlights*

For highlights I use a white gelly roll pen and white acryla-gouache. Sometimes I add the highlights before doing more washes so that I can push the whites back and then put another layer of white on top of it to add more depth. This is just for small spots of highlights.



## 10 *If you're unsure how to proceed, experiment on a digital canvas*

If I find myself struggling with a piece, I scan it in and make some digital adjustments. This can alleviate some apprehension about making a big move within a painting in progress. However, if I do mess up, I'm not afraid to print out my lines and start over.





## 11 *Apply fixative and add another wash*

For this piece I wasn't careful enough with my values, so I spray my piece with a workable fixative to help keep the watercolour in place before I add some dark blue washes to help push areas of the painting back, in order to match the mock-up changes I made digitally.



## 12 *Further digital adjustments and a spot of self-evaluation*

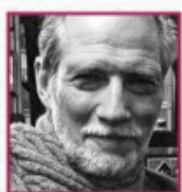
Even though the washes helped push the value contrast a bit more, it wasn't enough. I make some more digital changes to adjust the value, colour and other small details, and consider whether it would be helpful to start again or take the lessons learned with me to a new piece. When I finish a piece I'll write about what I learned and what my next steps are. I ask myself questions: were you successful in achieving your goals? If not, how could you continue to improve? If so, how were you successful? Are you personally happy with the piece, why or why not?



## First Impressions

✧ Gary Gianni ✧

Colouring in cartoon characters helped hone this comic artist's skills



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I was born in 1954 and raised in Chicago.

Every corner store sold magazines and comic books. The environment seemed to be a breeding ground for a lot of kids who became cartoonists, illustrators and filmmakers.

Living in a large metropolis might explain why most of my pictures include huge castles, epic crowd scenes and demons prowling foggy streets. The Midwest, however, is land locked and I didn't see the ocean until my teenage years. Can't explain how I've wound up illustrating so many stories with sailing ships at sea.

What, outside of art, has most influenced your artwork?

Aside from books and movies, it's family, friends and environment that shape us. In my neighbourhood, for example, there was a magic shop. The owner was a kind, elderly professional magician. He and his wife performed free kid shows in his store on Saturdays. I saw rabbits hop from hats, talking dummies, floating light bulbs and flying ghosts! It was fertile ground for someone who would later become a fantasy illustrator.

Does one person stand out as being helpful during your early years?

My mother drew poster-size images of Popeye and other cartoon characters for me. After I coloured them, she'd cut them out and tape them on my bedroom walls. She also helped paint my monster models. She was my first art teacher and earliest influence.



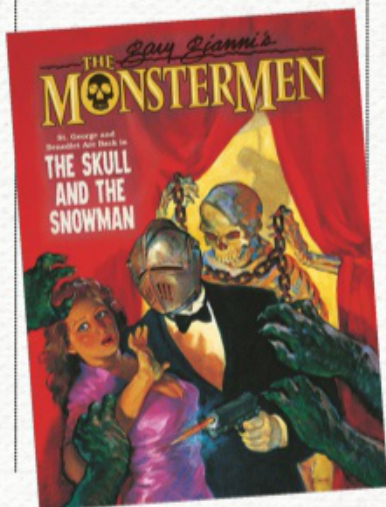
**A KNIGHT OF THE SEVEN KINGDOMS**

"The frontispiece to George RR Martin's novel, A Knight of the Seven Kingdoms. Traditional pen line drawing with digital colours."

“I saw rabbits hop from hats, talking dummies, floating light bulbs and flying ghosts”

### THE MONSTERMEN MYSTERY SERIES

Gianni's own creation is a comic book mix of pulpy adventure and Gothic horror stories. It first appeared as a story in Hellboy comics.



What was your first paid commission, and does it stand as a representation of your talent?

It was an illustration created for the Chicago Tribune Newspaper. I was 19 and was still in art school.

I continued to work for newspapers and also drew courtroom trial sketches for television. I'm not sure if any of that early work represented talent, but perhaps a desire to tell stories with pictures was apparent.

What's the last piece you finished, and how do the two artworks differ?

Over the past several years, I've created illustrations for fantasy

author George RR Martin's books. And now, a 300-page volume collecting all that work, Art of Gary Gianni for George R. R. Martin's Seven Kingdoms, which contains both previously published and unpublished work, is about to be released through Flesk Publications. It was thrilling to see my first job printed over 40 years ago and I'm just as excited now.

What are your painting rituals?

I work in traditional methods using pencil, pen and ink and oil paint. However, when colour is used over inked line-art, I rely on talented artists who excel with the digital paint box. I have no particular rituals worth noting. Oh, wait... yes, I have my ritualistic panic attack before starting each canvas.

How is your art evolving?

I prefer not to look back too much. Unfortunately, these questions seem to require a lot of retrospection here. I'm self-conscious enough without assessing my 'evolution'. Creative folks will tell you that self-consciousness is a prized tool in the devil's workshop. So, I'm happy to talk about materials, techniques – even the creative process – but beyond that, all I'll say is that my end game would be to evolve into NC Wyeth. For that to occur, I'll need return to that old childhood magic shop. Could be that the great painter's spirit is floating somewhere beyond the Chinese water cabinet.

What's the most important thing that you've taught someone?

If I can do it, so can you.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

I'd say, "Gary, use your time wisely. Time is more powerful than a locomotive and flies faster than a speeding bullet."

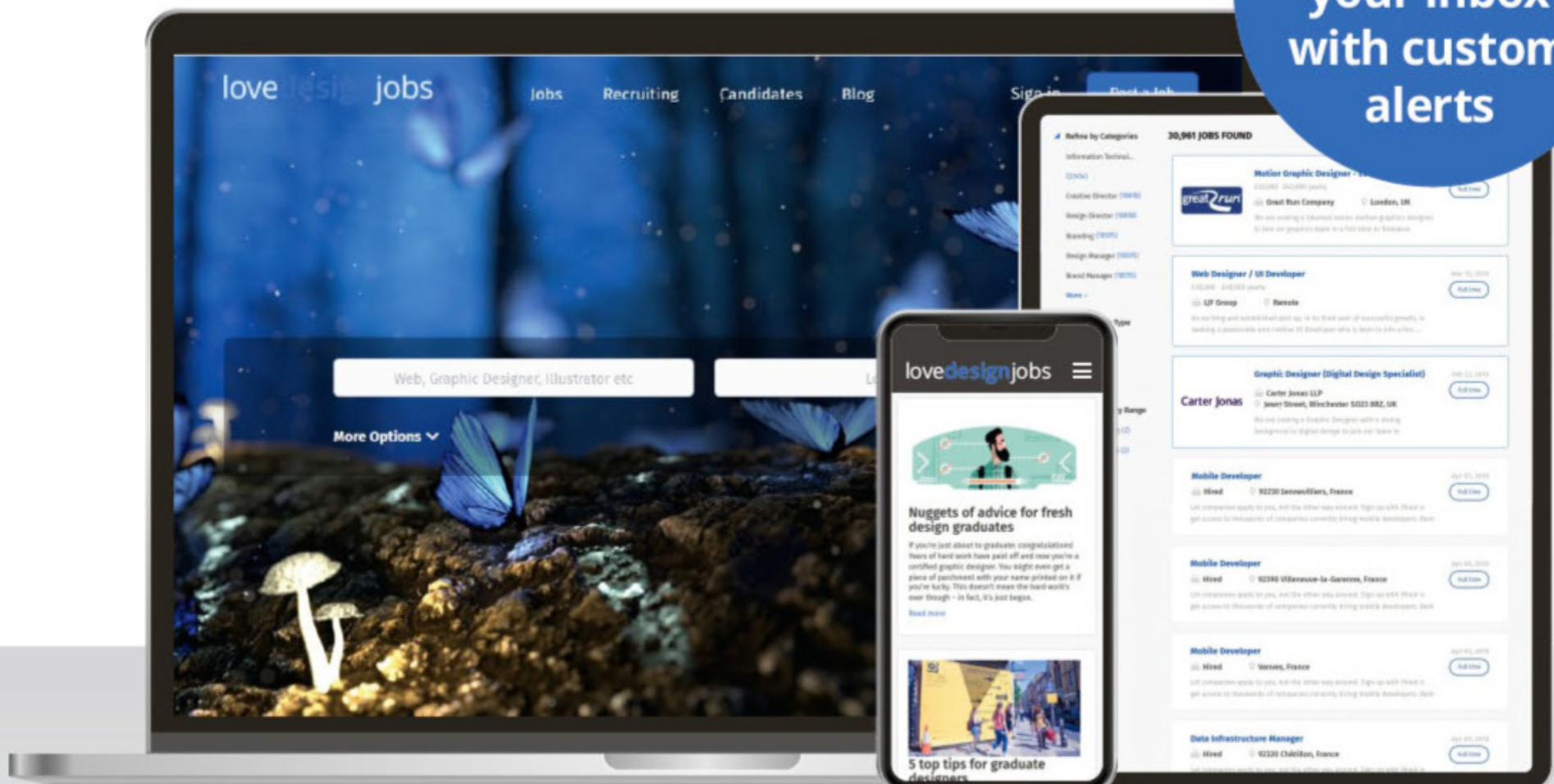
You can pre-order Gary's book, *The Art of Gary Gianni for George RR Martin's Seven Kingdoms*, at [www.fleskpublications.com](http://www.fleskpublications.com).



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